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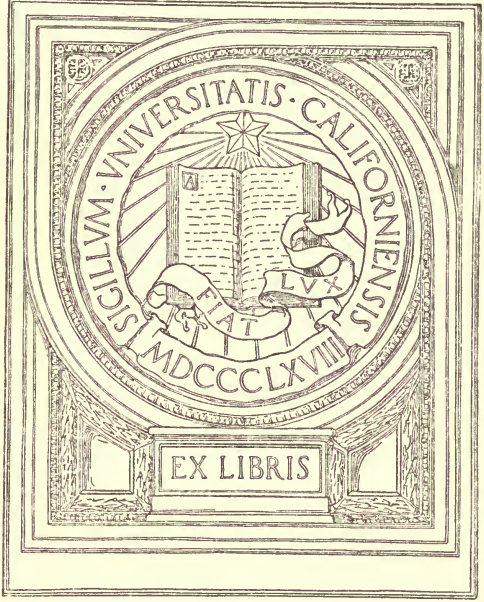
SHTON

R.A. DAGUE

IN MEMORIAM



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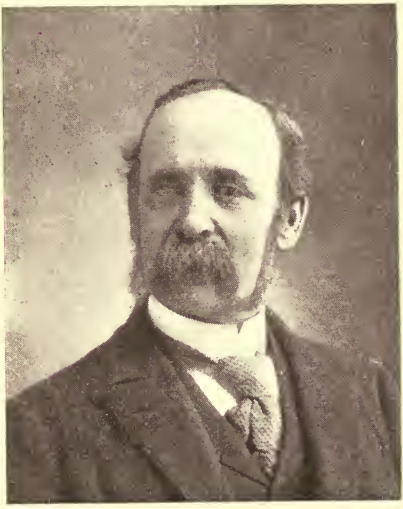

R. A. DAGUE.

HENRY ASHTON

A thrilling Story and How the Famous Co-operative Commonwealth was established in Zanland.

BY

R. A. DAGUE,

Ex-Senator and Attorney-at-Law.

Author of the "Dague Tramp Law;" also author of several pamphlets on the Capital and Labor problems; how to prevent bank panics; why the Government should own and operate the railroads and all other public utilities, etc., etc.

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA.
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.
1903.

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JESSICA PEIXOTTO

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GIFT

PREFACE

The author has endeavored in this volume to faithfully report the wrecking of the steamer Osceola off the coast of California, and the thrilling experiences of several of the rescued passengers and the loss of others. Among the passengers were Col. James Higsbee, a capitalist, of Melbourne, Australia, his wife and daughter. Four small boats filled with passengers shoved off from the sinking ship, and Col. Higsbee was separated from his loved ones. He never saw them again. Henry Ashton, engineer, proved to be a hero. George Batty, lawyer, and Thomas Lawson, adventurer, play an important part. Miss Higsbee passes through a series of intensely interesting experiences. Years later, the fortune of Col. Higsbee was made use of in establishing the famous co-operative commonwealth on the island of Zanland. The author and the Rev. B. M. Fay, of the United States, visited the island recently and were astounded and gratified at finding in successful operation a Socialistic government in a fertile and beautiful island inhabited by more than one million of highly intelligent people. In chapter twenty we have described what we saw and

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heard, confidently believing that many readers will be interested in a description of their institutions and their methods of solving the problems growing out of the relations of capital and labor.

No claim is made by the author that the book possesses any literary merit. The story is told in simple, plain language, without any attempt at embellishments, and it is hoped will both interest and benefit the reader.

R. A. DAGUE.

Alameda, California.

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HENRY ASHTON

CHAPTER I.

SHIPWRECK OF THE STEAMER OSCEOLA.

Many of our readers will remember the wrecking of the Steamer "Osceola" on the Pacific Ocean, March 28, 1895, about one hundred miles southwesterly from San Francisco. The vessel had sailed from Australia with twenty-four passengers and a valuable cargo consigned to merchants in San Francisco and some of the eastern cities. She encountered a furious storm, and the strain was so great that some part of the machinery failed and the steamer became unmanageable. For several hours she was buffeted by the mountainous waves and tossed to and fro like a cork. Nearly all the passengers were thrown into a panic, and the crew, although experienced seamen, gave evidence that they were greatly alarmed, while the stern, strong face of Captain Johnson wore a deeply troubled expression. About the tenth hour after the accident the wind began to subside, but the sea manifested no perceptible abatement of its fury. After the wind slackened the hope of the captain revived, and this had a reassuring effect upon the crew and passengers, who had seen him as he darted about on deck, above, below, everywhere. But how utterly helpless are even the bravest and most experienced

seamen, although in the staunchest ships, on the bosom of a mighty ocean when lashed to madness by the all-powerful and all-pervading greater ocean of air in rapid motion! The Osceola was doomed. Amid the deafening roar of wind and waves and the creaking and grinding of the vessel's timbers there came, like an electric shock, the cry: "The ship has sprung a leak and is sinking!" Captain Johnson's face became ashen; he knew the portentous meaning of those words. He knew his ship would soon find a resting place at the bottom of the sea. There was but one thing to do. Not a moment did he hesitate. His orders instantly rang out through his trumpet: "Lower the boats and all prepare to leave the ship!" The order was obeyed by the loyal crew with all the celerity of which they were capable. To bring the small boats alongside the steamer and to transfer the passengers into them was a most difficult and hazardous feat. Many of the passengers were panic-stricken and so unnerved from the hours of anxiety and the fierceness of the storm, and the fear of a watery grave, that they had sunk down in their staterooms exhausted, or were running to and fro on deck in such an excited mental condition that they had to be carried bodily by the crew, assisted by the less agitated passengers, to the edge of the ship and let down by ropes about their waists into the rocking, plunging boats. But the last man and woman had at last quit the steamer's decks and were sitting or lying in the four small craft. Captain Johnson was the last to leave the ill-fated ship. Within thirty minutes after the captain had quit the Osceola, and while the unfortunate passengers and crew were

within a hundred yards of the deserted steamer, she plunged beneath the surging billows and was seen no more.

CHAPTER II.

READER INTRODUCED TO HENRY ASHTON, THE HERO.

Let us now turn our attention from the passengers in the boats, and, going back to the time of the sailing of the Osceola from Melbourne, Australia, introduce our readers to three persons who are to act an important part in this story.

George Batty, a young lawyer of twenty-two, had left his home in Iowa three years before the occurrence of the events recorded in the preceding chapter. He had graduated with honor in one of the leading universities of America, and having nearly exhausted his capital in acquiring an education, conceived the idea of taking a trip to Australia in quest of business and a fortune. Arriving in Melbourne and satisfying himself that there was room for another lawyer in that city, he opened an office, selected a modest boarding place and awaited the call of clients. These came in due time, and within two years Mr. Batty was enjoying a good practice and had the high esteem of his associates at the bar and of the public generally. One of his first acquaintances after arriving in Melbourne was Henry Ashton, a gentleman about his own age, a native of Ohio, who had preceded him to Australia about two years.

Young Ashton came from poor parentage,

who had been unable to give their son a liberal education, but they had endowed him with a sound physical constitution, a clear brain and good principles. At the age of twelve years he had entered a machine shop as a laborer; he was intelligent and faithful, and promotion followed in due time till he became a skillful engineer. Though not receiving large wages, yet by his frugality and patient industry he was able to lay by some money and contribute not a little toward the support of his parents. Both of these dying when he was eighteen or nineteen, he determined to go to Australia. Here he was soon employed as an engineer on one of the railroads terminating at Melbourne. As Lawyer Batty and Engineer Ashton were patrons of the same boarding house, they were frequently thrown together, and these meetings led to the formation of a warm friendship between them. They spent many evenings together. As neither of them had become addicted to any of the vices which are too prevalent among young men, they had much time for reading and for the exchange of ideas. There were but few evenings for a year or more that Engineer Ashton, after the arrival of his train and his evening meal had been partaken of, did not walk across the street and enter the office of Mr. Batty. Many were the spirited but friendly discussions between them on economics, politics, religion, marriage and other current topics. Batty was an infidel or agnostic. Ashton was a Christian, though claiming to be a liberal one. Batty was a Republican, while Ashton was a Socialist. Batty said marriage is a failure and that he was a confirmed old bachelor; Ashton said he believed in love, and

marriage, and a happy home, and held good women in the highest esteem, and hoped some time to marry a true woman. Though differing on many important subjects, there existed between the two men a very warm friendly attachment.

One evening when Ashton had finished reading in the newspapers about the suppression of a labor strike by the police, who had killed two strikers and wounded five or six others, he flung down the paper and exclaimed:

"These labor disturbances will increase in frequency and violence until the people adopt Socialism. That is the only solution of the Capital-Labor problem."

"Now, Ashton," replied Batty, "I have to again express my surprise that so level-headed a man as you are on most subjects should be so badly off on the economic question, and that you can look with favor on a theory so manifestly unreasonable and impracticable as Socialism presents. My dear Ashton, why should I, or you, or any other man who has a little property that he has honestly earned, divide it up evenly with the improvident and lazy? Now, I say, let every fellow get what he can—honestly, of course—and let him enjoy his own, and let the other fellow look out for himself. I believe that the way to acquire property is to rustle for it. That is the way you and I have to do. Why, Socialism would reduce everybody to the same dead level and destroy the incentive in man to do something. No, no. It will not do! Competition is the life of trade. I know you talk about brotherhood and the Golden Rule, but you know, and I know, and everybody knows, that none of our great states-

men or financiers, or even clergymen in these latter days, seriously contend that those ideas can be put into practice to any extent. I admit that Christ was a communist and urged the Universal Brotherhood idea, and said: 'Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you.' I admit that this is a pretty theory and may have been quite proper at the beginning of the Christian dispensation, but it is not at all practicable now. The modern and more scientific doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest' has taken the place of ancient and impracticable Socialist teachings. I am not ignorant of the fact that your ministers hold up the Golden Rule as the rule that should govern us in all our dealings with our fellow men, but they know that no member of their church obeys that rule, and they do not expect the people to observe it, for they do not themselves. I am not saying they should be censured for this, for these equality-socialistic teachings of the church are idealistic and impracticable. In the animal realm we see the strong beasts of the forest devouring the weaker ones. We see the big fish swallowing the little ones; we see the hawks feasting on the birds and weaker fowls; we see these same feathered tribes eating the insects. All along the line, from the protoplasm to man, we behold evidence of the strong overpowering the weak. It is always the fittest that survive. It is according to a law of nature. Man observes the same law. Have not strong nations subjugated weak ones in all the past? Have not Christian as well as Pagan nations followed the rule that 'might makes right?' Did not Christian England quite recently despoil and kill Christian Boer? Is

not Christian America now subjugating Catholic Christians, the Filipinos? You know, Friend Ashton, that these questions must be answered in the affirmative. Christ's teachings touching man's dealings with his fellow man are ignored not only by individuals in ordinary business matters, but by nations, by congresses, by Presidents and all other rulers. Ah, I admit that ministers and statesmen, and Presidents, and Kings, talk quite eloquently, even piously, of the necessity of the masses to follow Jesus, but it is wise statesmanship and sound ministerial diplomacy to thus preach and teach the masses, but they see to it that the injunctions of Jesus, of love to God and love to man, forgiveness of your enemies, the Golden Rule and other idealistic theories are not put into practice, for if they were, young men would not enlist in the army and go to foreign lands and there shoot to death their fellow men, whom they had never seen and who had done them no harm. I tell you, Friend Ashton, you are wrong in standing for those old, exploded theories taught two thousand years ago; they are wholly impracticable in this age. We must have classes; we must have police and armies and warships, and the ignorant masses must be controlled and governed by the intelligent few. Brains will rule. I belong to the grand old Republican party. It has the brains and the money, for the two are always found together. It regulates industry by wise trust management, with men of great ability at the head; it builds up great navies that awe the other nations; it supports armies that carry our glorious flag around the world; it stands for expansion, for imperialism, for progress. Let me

entreat you, Friend Ashton, to join us. You have ability; you might acquire fame and fortune if you would abandon those sentimental, visionary theories of equality and brotherhood, and of trying to elevate the ignorant working people, who do not appreciate the efforts you put forth in their behalf."

At the close of this spirited speech of the lawyer the engineer was about to reply, but before he had time to utter a sentence there was a rap at the door.

"Come in," shouted Batty. The door swung open, and in walked a young man who appeared to be 28 or 30 years old. He was stoutly built, had black eyes and hair, and was attired in clothes of the latest fashion.

"Hello, Tom, is that you?" exclaimed Batty. "Allow me to introduce my friend Ashton. Mr. Ashton, this is my friend, Thomas Lawson." The two men shook hands and exchanged greetings, and the newcomer accepted an invitation to be seated. Although Ashton had never before met the stranger and knew nothing about him, he was not favorably impressed by him. Lawson's hand was cold; the expression of his eyes betrayed a cunning or a something that did not please the engineer. Ashton was mediumistic, or the possessor of some occult or psychic power, and he had, from many experiences in the past, learned that his impressions or intuitions touching the true character of men were often more reliable than his reason, but he was too gentlemanly and possessed a too keen sense of fairness, as well as too diplomatic, to exhibit any outward sign of his impression. Later, however, when he learned that

Lawson was something of a sporting man and an adventurer whose antecedents were unknown to Mr. Batty, his aversion to the man was strengthened.

"Well, what's the news, Tom?" said Batty.

"Oh, nothing worth relating," replied the person addressed, "except that the steamer Osceola leaves for San Francisco a week hence, and I have decided to take passage on her for the United States, and may be absent six months or longer."

"Good!" exclaimed the lawyer. "We will have a jolly time. Both my friend Ashton and I have engaged passage to America on the same boat. Mr. Ashton, I believe, goes on business and to visit a relative, while I am going on legal business. It is hardly professional for an attorney to talk about his cases, but I don't mind telling you and Ashton, both of whom are personal friends, that I am retained as counsel in an important matter involving $50,000. The case is now pending in the courts of Omaha and cannot be adjudicated without the appearance personally of Col. James Higsbee, the plaintiff. I am to accompany the Colonel, and, by the way, Mrs. Higsbee and their daughter Lilly are also to go with him. What a jolly crowd we will be! Both of you, I am sure, will fall in love with that girl. She is about eighteen; is accomplished, handsome, the only child, and will inherit two or three millions. As for myself, I have no matrimonial intentions. It will be ten years, perhaps twenty, before I shall seriously consider the weighty subject of matrimony—certainly not until after I have achieved distinction in my profession and amassed a fortune. Ah, there, Ashton, what are you blush-

ing over? You are not acquainted with Lilly Higsbee, are you? If you are, and she looks with favor upon you, you are a lucky fellow and deserve the congratulations of your friends."

'I have been acquainted with the young lady but a few months," replied Ashton. I have a high regard for her, but we are only friends."

During this conversation Tom Lawson seemed to be quite indifferent to what was being said by his two companions till the remark was made by Mr. Batty in which an allusion was made to the great wealth of Col. Higsbee and that Lilly was his only child, when his manner changed and thereafter he evinced a keen interest in the conversation. He made no remarks, but the close observer might have read from his eyes his determination to seek her acquaintance and if possible to become her accepted lover. Arising from his seat, remarking that he must be going, he said that he anticipated a pleasant time on the prospective voyage with such companionable gentlemen as Ashton and Batty, and bidding those persons good night, retired, expressing, as he did so, a hope that he might soon meet them again.

About ten days after the date of the conversation above mentioned the steamer Osceola left the Melbourne wharf and set sail for San Francisco. Among her passengers were Col. and Mrs. Higsbee, their daughter Lilly, and Sam, their trusted negro servant; George Batty, Henry Ashton and Thomas Lawson.

On the afternoon of the second day after they left port Miss Higsbee and Mr. Ashton met while promenading on deck. A smile of recognition on the part of the young lady, accompanied

by a remark that the day was a delightful one for an ocean voyage, opened the way for an hour's pleasant chat between the two young people. At their parting it was quite apparent that each seemed to be happy, and it required no especial gift of prophecy to predict that they would meet again, and often, before they landed in America. During the succeeding days of the voyage such prediction was fulfilled, and every afternoon the two might have been seen together. It seemed to be taken as settled by the other passengers, who had observed the loving glances and the gallant attention of the young engineer toward the lady and the pleasure which she exhibited in being the recipient of such attention, that he was an accepted lover or soon would be. All this had not escaped the attention of Tom Lawson. From the very first day he went on board he had endeavored to ingratiate himself into the good graces of Miss Higsbee, but his efforts had been unsuccessful. He had secured an introduction to Col. and Mrs. Higsbee, as well as to Lilly; he had sought her in the cabin and on deck; he had presented her with late magazines and books and had volunteered to turn her music while she was seated at the piano. He had, in her presence, talked of his education, his illustrious ancestry and his great wealth, but he had, as he could plainly perceive, made no favorable impression on the lady herself. Her manner toward him was dignified and reserved, but neither by words spoken nor acts performed did she give him good grounds for one ray of hope. But, shrewd and unscrupulous adventurer as Tom Lawson was, he did not propose to have his plans so easily thwarted. He had

made up his mind to make Lilly Higsbee his wife, not because he loved her, but for the reason that he had recently lost heavily at the gaming table; he needed money, and wanted it badly. Col. Higsbee was wealthy, and if he could succeed in marrying the capitalist's only child he would become the possessor of a large fortune. Baffled by the girl, he turned his attention to the parents. Determined he was to win their favor, and through them to accomplish his purpose. Seeking a favorable opportunity to meet Col. Higsbee and wife, he soon interested them in him by eloquently told and adroitly planned narratives in which he hinted at his relationship with the Rothschilds, his large landed interests in South America, his mines in Colorado and his valuable properties in London. For several days he pursued this course, and was not long in discovering that he had made a favorable impression upon them. He manifested profound respect for the Colonel, flattered Mrs. Higsbee and praised the daughter. On one occasion he quietly hinted that he was getting tired of a bachelor life and would like to marry and settle down in his elegant mansion in Paris. To this, after a long pause and a sigh, he added that nothing would so delight him and fill his life so full of joy as to make Lilly his wife, but—but he had little hope of winning her, as she did not encourage his attentions; then assuming a serious expression of countenance, he remarked in a low tone, tinged by sadness and with apparent solicitude for the young lady, that he presumed he was too late, even if under other circumstances she might have looked with favor upon him, but now she was doubtless the fiancee of another. "And now, dear

Colonel, I beg your pardon if what I am going to say should offend you."

"Not at all, not at all," replied Col. Higsbee. "Be at your ease, sir. Speak freely your thoughts. I assure you, Mr. Lawson, I have learned to be very fond of you."

"Well, then," said Lawson, "have you long known this Mr. Ashton, who is so assiduously courting your daughter?"

To this Col. Higsbee quickly and rather impulsively replied: "No, not long; only a few months, and I have no intimate acquaintance with him; but you astonish me, Mr. Lawson, by your remark that my daughter may be engaged to that man. Why, they have been acquainted but a few months. Now, while I have noticed that they have been frequently together during this voyage, I am sure that there is no deep attachment for the gentleman on Lilly's part. As to an engagement, such a thought is preposterous. We have not disapproved of their occasional meetings on this trip, for you are aware that on an ocean voyage there is less formality and greater familiarity permitted among passengers than on land at home. My acquaintance with young Ashton, as before remarked, is quite limited; but though he is, I believe, a railroad engineer, yet he was spoken of by his employers as an honorable, industrious man, and his deportment since he came aboard the ship appears to be frank and courteous. But what do you know of him?" asked the Colonel.

"Very little of my own personal knowledge," replied Lawson, "but I regret to say that his reputation, at least in some parts of Australia, is not

the most enviable. Perhaps I might have had better opportunities for knowing his standing than you, sir."

"Very true, Mr. Lawson, very true," said the Colonel, eagerly. "And now Mrs. Higsbee and I both will be under many obligations to you if you will enlighten us as to the reputation of this engineer who presumes to pay attentions to our daughter."

"His reputation to which I allude," replied Lawson, "is, first, that he is a Socialist; second, it is charged that he is a prominent leader in the Labor Unions, and that in the great strike of railroad employes of some two years ago he was an agitator and fomenter of discontent among the working people. Being a Socialist, it follows that he is an enemy of the capitalists and the present order of things, and contends that the rich and all others who have accumulated property should divide up with the shiftless and lazy. Not only that, but he associates on terms of social equality with ignorant farmers, greasy mechanics, and other vulgar people who work for a living, all of whom he contends should be permitted to enjoy equal political privileges with the wealthy and cultivated. Being a close observer, as you are, Colonel, I need not inform you that all these Socialist agitators are ignorant, vulgar fellows, who have the audacity to tell laboring people that they are doing all the work of the world and are receiving but about one-sixth of what they produce. They are creating discontent among the lower classes by insisting that they should have all they produce. Such a contention is absurd. My belief is that some were born to serve and

others to command. There have always been masters and slaves, and there always will be. These garrrulous agitators and mischief makers who are howling against the rich and making the air dismal with wailing over the alleged sufferings of their wives and illy-born progeny whom they say they cannot properly feed and clothe, under the present wage system, should be promptly and vigorously suppressed. They are being paid enough. If they received more they would squander it for strong drink or some luxury which they do not need. I say, Colonel, when these man who have more muscle than brains go out on a strike and disturb the business of the country, and put property in jeopardy, they should be given good allopathic doses of leaden pills and a taste of cold steel at the front end of a Winchester rifle. But I beg pardon, Colonel, if I have expressed my sentiments too freely about the engineer and the class to which he belongs."

"No occasion for apology, Mr. Lawson," exclaimed Col. Higsbee, with much earnestness. "I fully concur with what you have said about these clamorous Union Labor men and Socialists, and as for Engineer Ashton, I will speedily look after him, the presumptuous fellow that he is. I extend to you a most cordial invitation to dine with us at such time as will be most convenient to you. I am sure that Mrs. Higsbee will join me in this request."

"Most heartily," rejoined that lady. "It will give us the greatest pleasure to be honored by your presence at any time, and I wish to thank you for the information you have imparted to us as to the man who would have the presumption

to aspire to social equality with our daughter. We have higher aspirations for Lilly than to have her fall in love with and perhaps marry a poor man who is compelled to work for a living. And yet, while I detest those labor agitators and Socialists you have spoken of, I do feel much sympathy for the poor. The Scriptures say, "Remember the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions.' I have read that in the great cities there are many thousands of poor women and little children who sicken and die from cold, hunger and exposure and because the husband and father is unable to secure employment. Many thousands of tender girls, I am told, are forced out to earn their bread, and their wages are so low that they are compelled to sell their honor that they may procure the necessities of life. Only a few weeks ago, after a stirring sermon by our beloved pastor on the duty of Christians to send the Gospel to the heathen of foreign lands if they were to be saved from endless torment, I contributed $500, and my husband gave a like amount for that purpose, but I could not help thinking that Christian people might be doing even a better work by assisting these unfortunates of our own land."

At this point in the conversation lunch was announced, when Lawson withdrew, while Col. and Mrs. Higsbee repaired to the dining hall.

CHAPTER III.

THRILLING EXPERIENCE OF CASTAWAYS IN SMALL BOATS.

The reader will remember the argument on Socialism between Lawyer Batty and Mr. Ashton in the attorney's office in Melbourne, and how, after Mr. Batty's eloquent speech, further discussion was prevented by the arrival of Tom Lawson. No opportunity for a resumption of the debate had arisen until after the Osceola had been at sea several days. One fine afternoon while Batty and Ashton were on deck the occasion seemed propitious for a renewal of the argument. Mr. Ashton opened the debate by remarking:

"Well, Batty, I have not had an opportunity until to-day to answer your argument against Socialism made in your office before we left home. This seems to be a favorable time for me to combat you. What say you to that?"

"I say all right. I am ready to listen to your reasons for being a Socialist, if you have reasons," said Batty.

"Well, then," rejoined Ashton, "prepare for a Waterloo. First, let me venture to remark that I think you did not make a mistake when you decided to become a lawyer. I freely admit that you state the current objections to Socialism very plausibly and quite forcibly, but notwithstanding your logic and eloquence I am not convinced of the correctness of your position. If you will have the patience to hear me through I think I will convince you that Socialism is not so bad a thing

as you have been supposing it to be. First, let me correct some of your errors. You say that Socialists propose to 'divide up' all existing property, giving each person an equal share. You are in error. They advocate no such a scheme. Their contention is that every individual should have an equal opportunity with every other person in the race of life, that all should render some service to the world of mankind and should enjoy the full benefit of such service. Now, such an opportunity does not exist. Every child born ought to have an equal start with every other child. Any laws enacted by man which abridge this natural right are unjust in that they are contrary to the laws of Nature. Human beings must have ground upon which to walk, and to cultivate, and water to use, air to breathe, and an opportunity to work, that they may have food to eat, clothes to wear and houses in which to live. But what do we find? Why, we find an economic system that had its origin in the days when might made right and the King could do no wrong, under which the lands, the water, the electricity, the power of steam, the coal, the oil, the productive machinery —everything—owned or controlled by a few monopolists who as certainly own the man whose capital is his labor only, as ever lord or master owned a slave. In the olden time the successful warrior killed his enemy and took his property by force; then, by laws of inheritance of his own enacting, he gave this booty to his children, and they gave it to their children, and a capitalist class was maintained. The child of the capitalist has an inconceivable advantage over the child of the poor in the race of life. The rich boy does not

work; he adds nothing to the wealth of the world. Yet by reason of the power which inherited wealth gives him (which wealth his father and grandfather did not get by labor) he has in his hands the power to practically enslave the propertyless man. And he does do it by monopolizing the things that the poor man must have to enable him to live. The poor man can buy no great machines, no mines, no factories, no railroads, but the rich man can. Because he can and does he can dictate the terms upon which the wage-worker shall live. He can dictate his wages and the number of hours he shall toil for him. The wage slave can quit the service of his master, but if he does, where shall he go, what shall he do? He finds all about him the same condition of things. The only freedom left him is the right to change masters. If he decides to do that, and starts to walk on the public highway to another town, the constables can arrest him as a vagrant without any visible means of support, and compel him to break rock with a ball and chain about his limbs. If he prefers to strike for a raise of wages instead of seeking a job elsewhere, the courts will enjoin him, and if the cries of distress of his hungry wife and crying little ones loosen his tongue so that he talks too loud about his troubles, the police batter him with a club over the head. If he resists, the soldiers are called out and he is shot down like a dog.

"At this point I would, friend Batty, anticipate what you would say—i. e., that all this is according to the laws and well-established customs of civilized countries. Yes, I admit that, but the rich made the laws, and they made them in their own

interest. Did it ever occur to you that, for the most part, our vast system of laws is chiefly for the protection of property rights? We have volumes upon volumes of statutes and decisions defining the rights of property—of things—but the enactments for the protection of life—of men, women and children—might be contained in one small book. Socialism does not propose to divide up existing property, but it does propose to abolish some antiquated legal enactments that originated in a cruel, selfish age of the world; it does propose to adopt an economic system under which there shall be equal privileges to all and special privileges to none. It does propose to place a higher estimate on life and liberty of men, women and children than on property and perishable things. It does protest against the expenditure of billions of wealth created by labor in constructing warships, and implements to be used in the killing of human beings, and demands that this vast sum be applied in educating the children and in promoting the happiness of the people.

"Socialism, briefly defined, means the production of commodities for USE instead of for profit.

"Socialists propose to bring this about by placing all materials used in the production, distribution and exchange of commodities under the control of the whole people, to be used by the people and for the people.

"Socialists do not advocate confiscation. On the contrary, they are anti-confiscators, and desire so to organize industry and the conditions under which industry is carried on as to prevent a few from confiscating the wealth produced by the many.

"Socialists believe that this world was made for the whole human family, and not for a few. They therefore adopted as their motto, 'Equal opportunities to all.' 'Every man according to his deeds.' For war they would substitute arbitration; for confiscation, co-operation; for selfishness, generosity; for charity, justice; for monarchy, democracy; for slavery, liberty; for cruelty, kindness; for hate, love and sympathy for their fellow men. Who can say these fundamental principles of Socialism are impracticable? Are not some or all of them in practical operation somewhere now? Do they suggest anarchy or violence? On the contrary, will they not abolish war, right grievous wrongs and inaugurate peace and happiness throughout the world? Will their adoption destroy good government? Not unless monarchies and despotisms are good and 'governments of the people, by the people, and for the people,' are bad. Are these Socialistic principles antagonistic to true religion? A careful study of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ has led me to believe that they are not, but, on the contrary, they are in harmony with the doctrines of the great teacher himself.

"Socialists are sometimes called agitators and disturbers of the existing order of things, and I admit we are. We have good reasons for being such. Jesus was an agitator; John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison were agitators, and so was every reformer in all the past. There is great need of agitation now if the working people of Australia, and Europe, and America are saved from a deeper slavery. Let me, friend Batty, quote to you a few statistics from the United

States of America, where, within a few years, a few great capitalists, associating themselves together in Trusts, have astonished the world at the rapidity with which they amassed colossal fortunes by crushing small competitors and monopolizing all the public utilities. By a system of stock watering and tariff legislation, and a forcing up in price of all that the people had to buy from 30 to 40 per cent, while they kept the wages of workingmen nearly stationary, they have been enabled to accumulate private fortunes which for vastness of magnitude far exceed the wealth of the ancient Kings of Egypt. But here are some statistics:

"'In 1850 the total wealth of the United States was $8,000,000,000. The producers' share was sixty-two and a half per cent, the non-producers' share was thirty-seven and a half per cent. In 1890 the total wealth was $61,000,000,000. The producers' share had fallen to seventeen per cent and the non-producers' share was eighty three per cent. In 1900 it is estimated that the total wealth is $100,000,000,000. The producers' share is but ten per cent, the non-producers' share is ninety per cent. This tendency has gone on until now fifty millions of people own no homes. One-eighth of the people own seven-eighths of all the wealth.'

"The National Labor Statistician of the United States is quoted as saying that the average rate of wages per year paid in that country is $347, while the average product of each laborer is valued at $1,888. The laborer is therefore exploited out of $1,541 each year, or about five-sixths of his earnings.

"Ernest H. Crosby in 1901 wrote: 'If you had

been alive 150 years ago, and some prophet had told you that in the year 1901 one man could by means of machinery do the work of thirteen—striking an average for all trades and industries—what would you have said? Would you not have exclaimed: "Why, then, people will only have to work one-thirteenth as much as they do now, and with two or three hours' work a day they will have all the luxuries imaginable." Well, it is a fact. To-day one man can do as much as thirteen could in 1750. The wealth of the world has increased enormously. In this country especially it is increasing by leaps and bounds, and yet no less an authority than John Stuart Mill said twenty years ago that it was doubtful if machinery had lightened the toil of a single workman.' No, it has not, and never will, so long as private capitalists are permitted to own privately all the machines and monopolize all the forces of nature.

"Another American says: 'The aggrandizement of one class and the relative impoverishment of other classes, if allowed to continue, means the ultimate extinction of free institutions. A man who earns $1, $2, $3 or even $5 a day is an infinitesimal pigmy by the side of an elephantine trust magnate, with an income of $100,000 a day and the ownership of a whole cityful or stateful of property. The contrast between sovereign and subject in the Old World is nothing to the contrast between the laboring man and the monopolist of full growth. The German Emperor's income is about $8,000 a day, and he lives on that quite comfortably. But Carnegie, the ex-steel king, has an income of $40,000 a day, and Rockefeller, the oil emperor, has daily revenues esti-

mated at $70,000 to $200,000 a day. He can buy the labor of a hundred thousand workingmen with his surplus income. How utterly insignificant are the possessions, influence, opportunities and liberties of the ordinary man as compared with the wealth and power of one of these great monopolists. Thus democracy is impossible under such conditions. Men are not equal before the law when the wealth of one is microscopic and the wealth of another is mountainous. The problem of dealing with the trust is the problem of preserving free government and political equality.'

"Now, Brother Batty, I have not forgotten your argument on the 'survival of the fittest.' I ask you in all candor can you justify the exploiting of the millions by a handful of shrewd but greedy monopolists because the strong beasts of the jungles devour the weaker ones? Is man nothing more than an animal, and a savage one at that? Can you not conceive that the theory of evolution may be true and that in its higher mode of expression the kind, the just, the conscientious, the merciful man is a 'fitter' being than the greedy, the cruel, the conscienceless man, even though he may possess great ability—the man who grabs away from his fellowman five-sixths of his earnings and has no pity for his victim nor for his wife and babies? Again: You object to Socialism because you think it would destroy men's incentive. My answer to that is, that it is to be hoped that it will at least curb, and modify, and control the incentive of those who seem to have little or no regard for the rights of others. Surely you have not failed to observe that the great

and good men who have blessed the world were moved to render some valuable service to their kind rather than to exploit them. Such characters as Homer, and Moses, and Jesus, and Galilleo, and Buddha, and Columbus, and Herschel, and Lafayette, and Washington, and Garrison, and Lincoln, and many others, were moved by a higher sentiment than greed, and their names are honored and forever will be, while Nero, and Judas, and Benedict Arnold, and scores of arrogant, avaricious millionaires and monopolists are remembered only because of their greed, or their infamy.

"Next you say that Socialism is impracticable, In this you are again in error. It can easily be put into practical operation in its fullness. Have you thought, Brother Batty, that we have now a great many Socialistic institutions? Why, the fact is that all our good institutions are Socialistic. What is Socialism? My reply is that it is another name for co-operation—for collectivism. It may not have occurred to you but it is a fact nevertheless that all our public schools, cemeteries, libraries, bridges, highways, court houses, asylums, prisons, the postal system and other public institutions are Socialistic because they were established by the people collectively. The practice of individualism or competition in its purity, would disintegrate all civilization and send us back into savagery. On the other hand the inauguration of more Socialism would lead to a higher and better civilization.

"All the world's progress so far has been along co-operative or Socialistic lines. All future

progress must be in the same way. If we refuse to co-operate, one with another for the accomplishment of desirable ends, civilization will come to a stand still. If we foster the idea of the private ownership of public utilities long enough, we shall retrograde and the liberties of the masses will vanish. We are now facing a great problem. On its proper solution depends our democratic institutions. The trusts and other great aggregations of capital are seriously menacing our liberties. There is a remedy for this evil but it must be speedily applied. That remedy is to take these public utilities out of the hands of individuals and turn them over to all the people. The Nation should own the Trusts."

"But," interrupted Batty, "if I admit what you say as to the dangerous tendencies of these great monopolies I still do not see how they can be taken over by the people without confiscation or a bloody revolution."

"Neither confiscation nor violent revolution is necessary," said Ashton. "The problem is easy of solution. It is now and long has been the law and the practice that when the Government (city, county, State, Nation) wanted a piece of property owned by private parties, for public uses, to duly appraise the same, pay the owner the appraisement price and convert it to the use of the public.

"The steel trust, the oil trust, the railroads or any other monopoly or public utility might be appraised at what they are actually worth (with the watered stock squeezed out), the owners paid for the plant and they could thereafter be

owned by the people collectively and operated at cost to the incalculable benefit of the public.

"To thus convert private property to public uses would be applying a principle long established. Socialists urge that certain industrial conditions have recently grown up which make it necessary for the people to take another forward step in collectivism.

"One of the planks in their platform is 'no opposition to trusts as such, but when they become oppressive and injurious to the masses by displacing large numbers of working men and charge extortionate prices for their services or products, and destroy all competition in their line of business, then they should be converted from private to public ownership."

"Socialism does not propose to abolish all private property. Its proposition is to convert to public uses only such franchises or utilities as show by their nature that they should be owned collectively and ought to be conducted in the interest of all the people. Our contention is that machinery and the great forces of nature designed by infinite wisdom to contribute to the well-being of the whole human family shall not be monopolized by a few individuals for their selfish gratification and to the detriment of the whole race.

"Socialism is practicable because it is founded on justice. It will finally triumph because it stands for high ideals and those ideals are the happiness of every man, woman and child.

"Competition is impracticable because it is founded on selfishness and greed. It will fail because it stands for no high ideals. Only the

crafty few who have little regard for the rights of others can succeed under competition. Practiced in its purity it curses the masses and wrecks the morals of those who succeed by its methods.

"The few amass colossal fortunes, establish a moneyed aristocracy, learn to despise the victims of their greed and become despotic and enemies of a democratic form of government. The masses are forced into bankruptcy, poverty and ignorance. The poor are crowded to the verge of despair and crime.

"The doctrine that 'might makes right,' and the 'survival of the fittest,' may be a rule of conduct among ferocious beasts and reptiles of the jungle and among ignorant and savage tribes of men, but intelligent civilized people have evolved to a sphere where a higher law prevails. The great teacher said 'a new law I give unto you, that you love one another.'

"Competition, founded as it is on jealousy and strife, breeds anarchy, and is a deadly enemy of true religion and of a high civilization. No one can practice the precepts of Christ under a competitive system of business.

"Socialism, founded as it is on order, harmony and love for humanity, having emblazoned upon its banners, 'An injury to one is the concern of all,' will create conditions under which competition and anarchy cannot exist. It must triumph because it is planted on the law of progress governing heaven and earth. Though now misunderstood by some and wilfully misrepresented by others, it will encircle the world and

the powers of darkness and discord shall not prevail against it."

As Mr. Ashton closed this somewhat lengthy but earnest argument, and before Mr. Batty could make any reply, they were joined by Captain Johnson who seemed to wear a decidedly anxious expression of countenance. Turning to him Mr. Ashton said:

"Well, Captain, we are having a very pleasant voyage so far. I am enjoying the trip immensely. Every day since we left Melbourne the sun has shed his rays in splendor; no clouds have obscured the sky; no adverse winds have driven the staunch ship from her course, and no high and angry waves have been encountered. How far are we from San Francisco, Captain, and when do you expect to enter the Golden Gate?"

"Yes, gentlemen," said the Captain, "we have had fine weather and a smooth sea. I hope it may be our good fortune to have such favorable conditions to the end of the voyage. We are yet about two hundred miles from our destination. I would not needlessly awaken your apprehensions and indeed have little cause for doing so, yet I have to confess that there are indications that our good weather may not continue many hours. I need not detail my several reasons for this opinion for they would not be understood except by experienced seamen. There are, however, signs that a storm is approaching which is liable to break upon us in a very short time. I have in my twenty years' experience as a sailor on both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, passed through a

score of squalls and have no dread of the one that seems now to be impending, and yet, gentlemen, I never yearn for a big blow and a furious sea."

As the Captain made this observation, he turned his eyes to the westward which act was noticed by his companions and they too looked in the same direction. Above the horizon, and far distant, might be seen a low, dark bank of clouds, and to the experienced mariner indications of fierce winds were perceptible.

The Captain looked intently and for several minutes at the cloud, then without another word walked briskly to another part of the vessel. Ashton and Batty also separated, each going to his respective stateroom. In less than two hours the sky was overcast by a dense cloud, vivid flashes of lightning flitted athwart the sky and to the waters below, and the wind had increased to a gale. The waves grew larger and still larger every succeeding ten minutes, and it was apparent to all on board that a severe storm was on. For several hours it increased in fury, then came a cry from below that an important part of the propelling machinery had broken. The ship soon became unmanageable and an hour had not elapsed before she sprang a leak followed by the command of the Captain to "lower the small boats," and prepare to leave the steamer, as narrated in Chapter first. The boats were lowered and the passengers and crew were, with much difficulty, and amidst great excitement yet without serious accident, transferred to them.

CHAPTER IV.

RESCUE OF MR. AND MRS. HIGSBEE.

The reader has already become somewhat acquainted with several of the passengers. After he has read this story he will know them better. Occasions like this, when more than a score of people are in deadly peril, when each one must think and act quickly the dominant characteristics of each is apt to be revealed. At the command of Captain Johnson for all to leave the sinking steamer, the very first passenger to spring to the assistance of the faithful crew in carrying out their orders, was Henry Ashton. He ran to the state rooms and aroused the inmates. In a few words and without apparent fear, he informed the frightened passengers of the necessity to quit the ship; he quickly, yet without visible excitement, distributed life preservers; he assisted in lowering the affrighted people into the boats, and by his brave and self-possessed manner inspired many with confidence and hope. When the boats were ready his first act was to see that Miss Higsbee and her mother were among the first to be safely seated in one of the small boats. This done, he next directed his attention to Col. Higsbee but the Colonel was not in his berth; he had rushed on deck at the first alarm and was not easily found. No time was to be lost; others were to be saved and young Ashton heroically set about saving those nearest to him.

When the third boat was nearly loaded and Ashton was engaged in assisting an aged passenger to descend over the side of the ship, he was nearly hurled into the sea by Sam, Col. Higsbee's colored servant, who came rushing forward with two life preservers strapped about his body and one around his neck, shouting at the top of his voice:

"Oh, Massa Ashting, Massa Ashting! for de God's sake help dis here niggah for to git inter dat are boat. I's got 'ligion but I doan want to be going to heaben in dat are water so sudden!" And the engineer lowered Sam, life-preservers and all, to the coveted place.

As rapidly as was possible under the circumstances the passengers and crew were got into the boats, Captain Johnson and Henry Ashton being the last ones to leave the sinking steamer. After the four boats had shoved off and the Osceola had gone to the bottom of the sea, it was found greatly to the grief and disappointment of the Higsbee family, that they had been separated. Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly were among the occupants of one boat and Colonel Higsbee of another. With the Colonel was Henry Ashton but all the others were strangers.

At the first cry of danger on the ship Tom Lawson, trembling with fright, did nothing in the way of assisting others, but, jostling women and children aside, he leaped into the first boat lowered, where he crouched till after the disappearance of the steamer. After the immediate danger of going down with the ship had passed, and the boat had shoved out to a safe distance, and he had to some extent regained self-pos-

session, he then discovered that Mrs. and Miss Higsbee were also occupants of his boat while Henry Ashton, his hated rival, was not. At seeing this situation he gave utterance to a low chuckle of satisfaction. He feared he might yet be lost, for the waves still roared, and the wind howled most furiously, and he was far from land, but he said to himself, "If I and Lilly Higsbee ever do live to again set foot upon land, I will leave nothing undone to make her my wife; as for Ashton I hope he may be drowned."

For a time the four small boats were not far apart. Every possible effort was put forth by each to head to the eastward and to keep near each other, but all efforts to steer and to make effective use of the oars were futile. The sea was still turbulant and it required all the tact and vigilance that crew and passengers could command, to prevent the upsetting of their little crafts. But the storm was abating; the waves were slowly losing their fury and hope for rescue began to revive. But a new peril was in store for them. As the storm subsided a dense chilling fog settled down upon the ill-fated voyagers, and they began to fully realize the horrible situation of being out on a trackless waste of waters below, and a blinding, impenetrable fog above and around them, and that they were wet and cold and hungry. The darkness of night had set in. Not a ray of light greeted them from shore or passing ship. Some prayed fervently to God for deliverance; others were silent; still others apprehensive of deeper troubles and yet were not

without hope that their lives would be preserved.

No one who has not had like experience can have even a faint idea of the terror of such a situation. From the first Lilly Higsbee had exhibited a spirit of bravery whatever may have been her secret thoughts. Her mother was much of the night on the verge of despair. She had not only suffered from an intense nervous shock, but was inconsolable over the separation from her husband. She knew he had left the sinking ship and was in one of the small boats, but her feelings of thankfulness that he was thus saved were greatly overshadowed by the fear that he might still be lost, or that she might never see him again. Assiduously and with hopeful, cheering words, did Lilly apply herself in the effort to comfort her mother and to buoy up her spirits. The long hideous night finally passed and although the unfortunate castaways were suffering from fright, hunger and exposure, they hailed the advent of the morning with many exclamations of joy and satisfaction. They hoped and some fervently prayed that some passing ship might discover and rescue them. During the night Tom Lawson changed his position so that he would be near Miss Higsbee. Two or three times he ventured to address her, hoping thus to establish familiar relations but his efforts were not successful. She politely but curtly made answer to each of his interrogatories, but declined his proffered assistance, and avoided being drawn into any conversation with him. She knew of his selfish and cowardly conduct in

leaving the ship, for she had observed his actions. More than ever did she dislike him. Her dislike had even matured into disgust if not in actual hatred. Lawson could not fail to understand the feelings she had toward him for, knave and coward that he was, he was not a fool. He finally relapsed into a sullen silence. It was now broad day light; the winds had subsided; the sea was rapidly assuming its wonted placidity, and so far as sea, and wind, and sky were concerned, each gave assurance of a pleasant coming day. But not a sail was to be seen. During the night and the afternoon preceding it, the four small boats were widely separated each from the other. The morning slowly wore away; the sun was nearing the tenth hour, when Patrick, an Irish sailor, one of the crew of the Osceola, startled all on board. Standing up in the boat and pointing to the southwestward he almost screamed: "Look, gentlemen, look! There comes a steamer if me eyes don't decave me, and bedad, they don't for I see shmoke and what the divil could projuce a shmoke out there in the wather but a stame engine!"

Instantly all eyes were turned in the direction indicated by Patrick, and sure enough, a big stream of smoke could be seen in the distance. It was not long before the vessel herself was easily discerned, and joy unspeakable, she was headed almost directly toward the castaways. A signal flag was hastily prepared by joining two or three white handkerchiefs together which were vigorously waved for twenty or thirty minutes. For a time the anxious in-

mates of the boat were undecided whether or not their signal had been observed by the steamer; then, it was noticed that she slightly changed her course and steered directly toward them. As she did this and approached nearer, Patrick again shouted, "Be gorra, she sees us, and the crew is preparing to lower a small boat. We are all right; we'll soon be aboard of that craft and have a square meal and a drop of hot liquids. Thanks to the blessed Vargin, and may the blissings of all the saints of ould Ireland rist down on the head of the captain of that ship."

It was as Patrick had said. Within thirty minutes stalwart sailors from the "Josephine," a French steamer, were along side of our friends and in less than half an hour had transferred them to their own ship. Captain Reguet, and his officers and crew, treated them most kindly. Some were ill, others were benumbed and almost unable to walk from severe exposure, and all were hungry from their long fasting. Captain Reguet gave orders that everything should be done within the power of his subordinates to make the shipwrecked victims comfortable, and the orders were quickly and cheerfully executed.

The Josephine was bound for Portland, Oregon.

Not a single one of the rescued persons when they started to cross the Pacific had Portland as his intended destination, but there was not one of them now who was not willing, but rejoiced beyond expression, to accompany Capt. Reguet to that or any other port where they might be safely landed.

CHAPTER V.

RESCUE OF HENRY ASHTON, AND HIS HEROIC ACT.

And now the curiosity of the reader is aroused to know the whereabouts of the passengers in the other three small boats. Several of them were never heard from and probably went to the bottom of the sea. The little craft boarded by Col. Higsbee and Henry Ashton, had even a more perilous and thrilling experience than the one picked up by the Josephine. Like the others, it was, for what seemed an age to its occupants, helpless in the grip of the storm and fog. After a terrible experience of about forty-eight hours duration, it was fortunate enough to be seen by a western bound ship, the "Roswell," whose destination was Hong Kong, China. Small boats were promptly sent to its relief. It is only those who are endowed by a vivid imagination who can have even a feeble conception of the joy felt by those rescued persons wnen they found the Roswell's boats, manned by stalwart seamen, along side of them, and they realized that they were to be saved from a watery grave or what might be worse, death from starvation.

Though weak from exposure and long abstinence from food and from loss of sleep, all except Col. Higsbee were able to put forth the necessary physical exertion to transfer themselves to the boat sent to convey them to the ship. The Colonel's physical strength, had,

since the disaster to the Osceola, gradually and steadily failed. He was advanced in years, of delicate constitution, and was still suffering from the effects of an old army wound. He had almost ceaselessly bemoaned the cruel fate which had separated him from his wife and daughter, and he alternated between grief because of the separation, and fear that they were lost. Henry Ashton was untiring in his endeavors to inspire him with hope that he would meet and greet them again. He assured the Colonel and reassured him that Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly had been safely placed in the first small boat that shoved off from the Osceola; he had himself assisted them and saw them seated in the boat. The storm had not lasted long, and at the time of the sinking of the ship had considerably abated in fury. One or two experienced seamen had gone in that boat; the craft, itself, was a good one.

"There are many good reasons," said Ashton, "for the belief that the ladies are safe, and had ere this, been rescued." But the Colonel sighed deeply and could not be comforted; he had little or no hope that he would ever behold them again.

Col. Higsbee found when it came his turn to step into the skiff sent out by the Roswell, that his limbs were swollen and stiffened and that it was with pain and difficulty that he could move at all, but through the kindly assistance of Ashton, and without serious annoyance or delay, he was safely seated in the boat and was moving rapidly toward the great ship. As the skiff came along side of the Roswell a ladder was let

down from the deck on which the passengers ascended, one by one, to the floor above; the Colonel and Mr. Ashton remaining till the last.

"Now, Colonel," said Ashton, "you go next and I will support the lower end of the ladder." In obedience to this instruction the old gentleman laboriously and painfully began the ascent. He had succeeded in attaining to about half the distance when, missing his intended grasp of the rung above, owing to a lurch of the skiff, he suddenly turned partly around, lost his foothold below, and toppled off into the sea between the boat and the steamer, and in a brief moment disappeared from sight. For an instant Henry Ashton looked horrified; but he stood motionless for a few seconds only, then quick as a flash, he threw his coat from his shoulders, flung his cap from him and after one or two swift strides, plunged into the water from the stern, that being nearest to the spot where the Colonel went down. He was an expert at swimming. Rapidly turning himself in the water, and after a few strokes with his hands, he came to almost the exact place where Col. Higsbee disappeared. He knew that there was a probability that the drowning man might rise to the surface before life became extinct. His chief fear was that the Colonel might, because of the swift current, pass under the ship; he hesitated a moment looking intently into the waters below and about him. Concluding that his fears that the body had passed under the ship were well founded, he quickly inflated his lungs with air, dived under the steamer and disappeared. The accident had been witnessed

by many on deck who also observed the action of Ashton. All had taken place so quickly that the spectators had done nothing but give utterance to exclamations of horror. But a few minutes had elapsed, however, when Ashton was seen coming from under the curve of the steamer bearing the limp and apparently lifeless body of the Colonel. Keeping himself and the body afloat by vigorous action of hand and feet, he cried: "Throw me a rope! Throw a rope; quick—be quick!"

Not many seconds had passed before a stalwart sailor rushed to the railing with a coil of rope one end of which he flung with precision to a spot within easy reaching distance of the man who had risked his own life in the effort to save his friend. Ashton reached for the line, and with dexterous motions, soon had it wound and knotted about the Colonel while he held his head above the water.

"Now draw him up on deck and be careful," next cried Ashton. This was promptly done while Ashton steadied the body as he himself ascended the ladder.

The physician of the ship, Dr. Logan, was summoned and immediate efforts for the resuscitation of the unfortunate man commenced. For more than an hour his life hung as in a balance and had Dr. Logan and Henry Ashton acted upon the advice of several of the spectators, their efforts to bring him back to life would have been abandoned. But these two persisted, and when they too were about to cease further efforts, and the doctor was applying his final

test, his face brightened, and turning to Ashton, said:

"Your friend will live." He was removed to a state room where for several hours longer the effort of resuscitation was continued.

The patient improved slowly. Several days elapsed ere he could speak above a faint whisper, and even then he could utter but a few audible words. Henry Ashton was his almost constant companion; he anticipated all his desires; he personally attended to the proper execution of the doctor's instructions, and as he became convalescent he talked to him, read to him and pictured to him the happy, joyful reunion with his wife and daughter which was to be one of the glorious events that was certain to come in the not far distant future.

"For," said Ashton to the Colonel, "while it is true that the Roswell is bound for China, yet it will not require a long time to make the trip to Hong Kong and then Colonel, you will be quite well and strong, and we will take the first steamer bound for the United States where I have no doubt we will soon meet Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly, for I feel sure they are safe in California."

On the day following the one on which the accident befell Col. Higsbee, the lookout on board the Roswell called the attention of the Captain to what appeared to be a small boat flying a signal two or three miles distant. Bringing his glass to his eyes that officer ejaculated:

"Yes, sure enough, there is a small craft containing four or five persons and they are seemingly trying to attract our attention."

Upon making this discovery the Captain gave orders to change the course of the steamer, and proceed in the direction of the boat. It required but a short time in which to bring the ship near the party who were by signals making clear their desire to be rescued.

Coming within hailing distance, the Captain spoke to the occupants of the small boat, telling them to come alongside the ship. This they did and when near enough to be heard one who seemed to be the spokesman for the party, cried:

"We are survivors of the wrecked Osceola; for God's sake take us on board."

"Come up alongside then," replied Captain Jones.

Though nearly exhausted from exposure and fatigue, the men handling the oars in the small craft, quickly shot their boat to the place designated, and within half an hour from the time they were first seen by the look-out they were safely on board the staunch steamer Roswell. Like the other castaways from the Osceola rescued the day before, they were cold, and wet, and hungry, and their reception was as hearty and kind as that accorded to their fellow-sufferers. Among these latter rescued was Lawyer Batty. The meeting of Batty and Ashton was a happy one. Each wrung the hands of the other long and vigorously. Each congratulated the other on his rescue; each manifested almost a brotherly attachment for the other, for while they differed on religious, on political, on social and other subjects, yet they each had a high regard for the other, because each recog-

nized in the other, honesty of purpose, and each knew the other's good habits and irreproachable moral character. While the other rescued passengers were being looked after by the officers and assistants of the ship, Ashton quickly conducted Mr. Batty to his room and administered to his pressing wants. As he spread food before his friend, and dry clothing, he narrated, in answer to Batty's rapidly propounded questions how Col. Higsbee and the others, and himself, were saved, how the Colonel had fallen overboard, and how he was now convalescing, and they knew nothing of the fate of Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly, Tow Lawson or the others, in the other two small boats.

After Mr. Batty had plied many questions, and had received such information as was in the power of Ashton to impart, and had himself answered his friend's inquiries, and had eaten all that prudence would allow, and had had a change of raiment, he slept long and soundly, and awakened the following morning with greatly renewed strength and in a cheerful mood. Without delay he hastened to see Col. Higsbee, and to converse with him the time allotted for the interview by Dr. Logan. Having in mind the suggestion of Ashton, he encouraged the Colonel by expressing the opinion that there could be little or no doubt but that Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly were rescued and were now safe in San Francisco.

"There are many good reasons for so thinking," said Batty, "and it is only a matter of a few weeks when you will be reunited as a family."

CHAPTER VI.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF COL. HIGSBEE.

A week had now passed since the accident to Col. Higsbee, and while Ashton and Batty every day, and several times each day, congratulated the Colonel on his improvement, yet he was very weak and much of the time melancholy over the separation from his loved ones, and was profoundly anxious as to their fate.

One day during the absence of Ashton and Batty from the room, the Colonel said to Dr. Logan: "Doctor, please narrate to me the particulars of the accident that befell me. They are not very distinct in my mind." Whereupon the doctor complied with his patient's request, explaining every thing in detail. He especially praised Henry Ashton for his heroism in plunging into the sea and saving the life of the Colonel and spoke most enthusiastically of his devotion to the invalid ever since.

"I do not know," said Dr. Logan, "the relationship existing between you and Mr. Ashton, but I have carefully observed the actions of the young man, and have studied his face well, and I have come to have the highest possible respect for him. I think he is a brave, noble, honorable man, Colonel."

"Yes, yes," responded Col. Higsbee. "He has proven to be a good, true friend of mine. Once I did not appreciate his real worth; I do now."

A few days later Colonel Higsbee, after a

little physical exertion gave utterance to a suppressed cry of distress, and when interrogated as to the cause, replied that he had been stricken by a severe pain in the region of his back. The doctor gave him a critical examination and at its conclusion suggestively shook his head. This was observed by Mr. Ashton, who later, questioned the medical man as to the cause of the new symptoms. The physician replied:

"Mr. Ashton, I regret to say your friend is in a precarious condition. I observe from a careful diagnosis of the case, that the elderly gentleman has a complication of diseases. Some of his internal organs have apparently long been diseased and he has, for many years, been suffering from an old wound. These with the late exposures he has passed through would most surely have soon prostrated him had no accident befallen him. Now reinforce all these ailments by a plunge into the sea and you have a serious case indeed. It is marvelous that your friend is alive at all. I have fears of a relapse and if that comes as there are decided indications that it may, there will be slender hope for his recovery. I advise you to prepare yourself for the worst."

It was as the doctor had feared. In addition to his physical afflictions Col. Higsbee's mind was painfully agitated over the separation from his wife and daughter, and the thought that they had been lost. He was most of the time inconsolable. His symptoms steadily grew more and more alarming, and it was evident to his attendants that his strength was giving away and he was rapidly failing. This the Col-

onel himself seemed to understand. The morning after the conversation mentioned that took place between Ashton and the doctor, the Colonel after a protracted silence beckoned to Dr. Logan to come nearer, and then said:

"Doctor, do not give me any more medicine. It will do me no good. I am going to die. This I know, for last night I had a vision, or a dream, in which my angelic mother appeared to me and said: 'My dear son, your earthly career is nearly closed. You will soon pass over to us. Arrange your earthly affairs and prepare for the change. Be brave, be of good cheer; I shall with many others of your departed loved ones be present at your new birth, and will extend to you a joyful welcome to the land where sickness and accidents and death do not occur.'

"Then with an angelic smile, and with outstretched arms as if to embrace me, she vanished.

"I know, doctor, that this was no hallucination. It was not a disordered fancy; it was a true, a glorious reality. I am going to pass away; I have no fear; I am anxious to go. Please call Henry Ashton, and Mr. Batty, and Captain Jones. I desire their presence."

The parties designated were soon at the bedside of the dying man.

"Mr. Batty," said the Colonel, "get paper and ink and pen." The writing materials being procured, the Colonel continued: "Now write down my words:"

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT.

"I, James Higsbee, of Melbourne, Australia,

being of sound mind and in view of approaching dissolution, do make and publish this my last will and testament, revoking all others. I give and bequeath to my beloved wife, Mary Higsbee, my residence property; also my brick business block, also the St. James Hotel property, each situated in the city of Melbourne, Australia; also one-half of $500,000 consisting of money, bonds of Australia, and of the United States of America, and stocks in the bank of Australia; also all of my chattel property and personal effects other than those hereinafter named. To my loving daughter, Lilly Higsbee, I give and bequeath my undivided half interest in the steamer, 'The Prince,' also 20,000 acres of real estate with the appurtenances thereto belonging, situated in the island of Zanland; also 10,000 acres of land located in York county, Australia; also 1,000 acres of real estate in Douglas county, State of Nebraska, U. S. A.; also one-half of the $500,000 consisting of money, bonds, and bank stocks hereinbefore mentioned.

"In the event that neither my wife nor daughter are living at the date of the execution of this, my last will and testament, then (that fact having been proven) I give and bequeath the entire amount of my property, both real and personal, to Henry Ashton, of Melbourne, who bravely risked his own life to save mine.

"I hereby appoint as my legal executors of this, my last will and testament, Henry Ashton and George Batty, and order that no official bonds shall be required of them.

"Knowing of the engagement of my beloved

daughter Lilly to Henry Ashton, I hereby most cheerfully consent to their marriage, and I invoke the blessing of God upon them."

Col. Higsbee had summoned all his failing strength to dictate his will which he did in broken sentences, and after long pauses, and when it was finished he asked that the instrument be presented to him for his signature. The pen was placed in his hand and the paper held in proper position when the dying man, after a painful effort, succeeded in affixing his signature, "James Higsbee," to the writing. The instrument was also signed at his request, by Captain Theodore Jones, Dr. Wm. Logan, and George Batty, as witnesses; and Mr. Batty was designated as custodian of the valuable legal document. In a whisper that was scarcely audible the Colonel requested Dr. Logan to invite all to withdraw from the room except Mr. Ashton. After his request had been complied with he feebly extended his hand to Ashton and signified his desire to speak. Ashton bent low that he might catch the words of the rapidly sinking man. The Colonel said:

"My dear son, I most sincerely and gratefully thank you for your great kindness done me. Once I did not appreciate your real worth. I now know you to be an unselfish, noble young man. I have learned to love you as a son. My dying request is that you seek diligently for my daughter, Lilly, and if she is yet alive and you can find her, that you carry to her this, my last message: "God bless you, dear Lilly, you knew Henry Ashton better than I did. You have consented to be his life companion because

you love him. He is worthy of you, you have my consent to become his wife and may the blessings of God and of his holy angels rest upon you both."

The effort had completely exhausted the strength of the stricken man. Ashton gently assisted him in resuming his former position. Not another word was spoken. While clasping the hand of his friend he closed his eyes, his breathing became more and more labored; he gasped; a slight shudder ran through his body, and he was gone.

Henry Ashton and George Batty mourned sincerely over the death of Col. Higsbee. They had thought to embalm the body and when they reached Hong Kong to reship it to Melbourne, but on inquiring of Capt. Jones, they found to their great regret, that the ship was not prepared to execute such service to the dead. The rules of the steamer required burial in the sea within three days after the death of a person on board. All that remained of Col. James Higsbee was therefore, on the morning of the third day after his demise, with appropriate and impressive ceremonies solemnly consigned to the keeping of the mighty Pacific ocean.

CHAPTER VII.

SPIRITED DEBATE BETWEEN LAWYER BATTY, INFIDEL, AND ENGINEER ASHTON, CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST.

A day or two after the funeral, as Ashton and Batty were sitting on deck conversing about the thrilling events that had transpired during the past few weeks, the lawyer turned to his companion and said:

"Friend Ashton, I have been thinking how inexpressibly sad is all this. This life is filled with disappointments and pain and misery. At the very hour of our birth trouble begins. If we escape fatal diseases and accidents incident to childhood, and grow to maturity we experience more pain than pleasure; more failures than successes; more reverses than triumphs, and death and separation from loved ones, sooner or later overtakes us. The more closely I study the problem of life the more pessimistic I grow. Religion, I am convinced, is a delusion, and life is really not worth the living. I am coming to think, Brother Ashton, that death ends all, or, if we do exist beyond the grave, our personality will have been extinguished and our so-called souls or minds, will have been absorbed by the universal soul, or mind, as our bodies are absorbed by mother earth. I am aware that good men for thousands of years have thought differently. They have told us of God, and the immortality of the

soul, and that the Bible is divinely inspired and is infallible, but what do they know about these things? Nothing, absolutely nothing. They have not seen God; no spirits of dead people have ever returned, and as for their infallible Bible, all well informed persons know it abounds in contradictions, is ignorant of science, is often false historically, and is composed of a collection of ancient writings of men who lived in different ages of the world, many of them superstitious and ignorant. These writings were gathered together by conventions or councils of men who made no claim to inspiration and put into a book which we call the Bible. As to Jesus. Although books were written in the age in which he lived and records of important events were kept, yet Jesus wrote nothing, nor did he make any provision for any record to be made of his sayings or doings. All that we know about his life and teachings is based on legendary and hearsay evidence, not reduced to writing for several generations after his death. Many of the writings purporting to give a true account of the life of Christ, once believed to be a part of the sacred Scriptures, are now rejected and the correctness and authenticity of a considerable portion of what remains is strenuously questioned by many scholars to-day. Terrible wars have been waged and rivers of blood have been shed over disputes between contending factions, each claiming to be the true disciples of Christ. If judged by their deeds I would say that professing Christians have been the most cruel, fanatical and blood-thirsty of all religious sects. They have for two thou-

sand years persecuted the Jews with a relentless and fiendish persecution, and fought each other like tigers and have slaughtered their millions. They have for mere differences of opinion as to the teachings of their infallible book cast their fellowmen into dungeons, burned them at the stake, bored holes through their tongues, gouged out their eyes, torn the body into fragments, racked and imprisoned them and inflicted all manner of horrible tortures. They have persecuted with death inventors and discoverers, opposed science, hung ignorant old women as witches, and enslaved millions of negroes whose ancestors they believed had been cursed of God and doomed to eternal slavery because a drunken Noah had cursed his own son for being more modest and decent than himself. All this, and more, was done on the authority of the Bible, and in the name of the holy Christian religion. Do you say that all these crimes were committed in an ignorant age, and that the present-day Christians would not commit such atrocities? I admit that the average individual Christian is kindlier and less fanatical than those of a century ago, but I contend that we are indebted for such improvement to liberal thinking reformers, who were always denounced by the church as infidels, but even now every Christian Nation is armed to the teeth and stands ready to spring upon and destroy each other. But a short time ago Christian England overran the Transvaal, murdered the Christian Boer, burned his home, devastated his fields, and hunted him to his death as though he were a savage wild beast.

Protestant Christian Americans pursued a like

course in dealing with their Catholic Christian brothers, the Filipinos. There is not a Christian nation on earth to-day which does not confer greater honors on the successful killer of his fellows than it does upon its philanthropists, inventors and peacemakers. No, friend Ashton, I cannot accept Christianity as it has been taught and practiced. I would like to believe in a future state of conscious existence, but as a lawyer I must have better evidence that there is such a state than the unsupported statements of the Bible or the clergy."

At this the lawyer paused, when his companion replied :

"While I commend your earnestness, Friend Batty, acknowledge your honesty of purpose, and admire your ability, I must oppose your main argument, and decline to coincide with your conclusions. I quite agree with you that the Bible had its origin in the way you have stated, and that it is not free from all error; but while I admit that I contend that it contains much wisdom and truth, and is altogether a wonderful and invaluable collection of writings. I do not say as do some, that it is all—every word—an inspired revelation to the world, but I do maintain that the Bible contains an inspired revelation. Much of it is allegorical and has in the past been misunderstood. Other portions are historical or an account of the doings of ancient peoples. I am not surprised that you and Colonel Ingersoll, whom you so greatly admire, cannot believe in the existence of such a God as the ancients feared and worshipped, but, dear Batty, intelligent Christians of the present day do not think of the Deity as did the an-

cients. They worshipped God through fear. We worship him because we regard Him as a being of infinite love. It is, however, to the credit of the ancients that they believed that there existed an invisible, intelligent power wiser than themselves. They saw the sun, the moon, the stars; they beheld the wonderful and orderly operation of nature's forces and they wisely reasoned that these things were the effects of some antecedent cause. They reasoned more logically than some of our modern philosophers, who advance the theory that 'all life is produced by spontaneous generation'—'that the brain generates thought as the liver secretes bile.'

"The ancients, although ignorant of science and holding low ideals as to the attributes of God, clearly perceived that 'out of nothing, nothing comes."

"Now I beg your pardon, Batty, but I must be frank with you when I say that the modern Atheist is not a profound and logical thinker. If he were he would easily perceive that back of all living things were generations of other living things. The Atheist is forced back, back, back to the first cause, and he cannot account for that first cause except by the illogical assumption that the first cause of all living things was 'spontaneous generation'—was chance—pure accident. The Christian philosopher contends that the first cause is intelligent force, infinite power, infinite intelligence, universal spirit, omnipotent, omnipresent, omnicient, from everlasting to everlasting—that is over all in all, is all—is God. Jesus said "God is spirit," not a spirit.

"It appears that in every age of the world men

and women of every race and every condition of mental unfoldment have believed that there existed an intelligent, invisible power greater than themselves. The inclination to so believe is a part of man's being. Phrenology teaches that man has an organ of the brain which it has named Veneration, and its legitimate function is to reverence a higher power. It prompts us to adore something higher and wiser than ourselves. It is therefore as reasonable to believe that such organ is as essential to our well-being as is our heart, or lungs, or reasoning faculties. We would not have been endowed with an organ of Veneration if there had been nothing to venerate. When legitimately exercised the organ of Veneration gives us grand and ennobling conceptions of Deity; if wrongly directed we may be led to worship the sun, the moon, or some material substance. I do not conceive of God, or universal spirit, as did the ancients. Their organ of veneration prompted them to worship, but their reasoning faculties, not being so enlightened as are those of the people of this day, they attributed to God many attributes that he could not possess. In their writings they gave us the best definitions they knew, but they thought and wrote in the infancy of the race. We have in this age broader, juster loftier conceptions of God than they. It is true that some of our religious teachers insist on going back to an ignorant age of the world for their definitions of God, and accept and teach ancient religious dogmas and creeds as infallible, but the more intelligent teachers of this day do not present to us a God of jealousy, and hate, and vengeance, as did those of old. Now we are told that God is love, is life

—is the sum total of all things visible and invisible, that in Him we live, and move, and have our being—that we are ourselves a part of God—that we are in essence ourselves God.

"Now as to Jesus: Whether you admit he was or was not divine, you must acknowledge that his reputed life was blameless and his teachings both wise and good. Can you conceive of a sermon that contains more wisdom and higher ideals than that of the Sermon on the Mount? I do not contend that Jesus was the Supreme God, and that beside him there was none other, but I do maintain that he was the Son of God. Jesus was divine and so is every other man, woman and child in that we are all the children of God, are a part of God and cannot be forever separated from him. Jesus was unfolded. We are not. The bud contains all the possibilities of a rose and in due time will be a rose, but as buds they do not shed the fragrance of the full blown rose. Men, ignorant men, sinful men, have the possibilities of gods. They are buds now; they will be gods some time.

"You say, friend Batty, that professing Christians have bitterly disputed over theological dogmas and have shed rivers of blood. Yes, that is true, but there was nothing in the teachings of the gentle Nazarene to cause such anti-Christian conduct. Happily in this day the disputes over the mooted theological dogmas have largely subsided, and the truly Christian teachers are now preaching love to God and love to man. There has been a general revolt against the gloomy theology even of a few centuries ago, which strove to move men through fear alone. Then it was thundered

into the ears of the people that God predestinated men to a horrible and endless hell; that he damned millions before they were born, and hurled little non-elect infants into a bottomless pit, there to suffer and wail throughout eternity. All this brand of preaching has been happily abandoned, and now the supreme importance of building up a good character and living a Christ-like life, is the theme dwelt upon by clergymen of all denominations. And here let me say, Brother Batty, that one of the encouraging signs of the times is that many of the abler ministers are beginning to preach Socialism because they have come to see that co-operation—brotherhood—is more in harmony with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ than competition, under which one man can succeed only by exploiting his brother. These religious teachers have seen that the application of the teachings of the great Teacher are positively impossible under a competitive system of economics. The Golden Rule can never be applied so long as that system prevails. Competition is based on selfishness; it appeals to man's baser emotions; it is directly opposed to everything that Jesus commanded. Socialism, which is but another name for co-operation, is in strict harmony with the teachings of Him who taught as never man taught. I fully agree with you that the church which favors war except in self-defense, which caters to the rich, the powerful, the proud, the selfish—the church that sees working people systematically exploited without protest, by soulless combinations of capital, which beholds millions of men, women and children suffering for the want of the necessaries of life because of the

monopolistic laws and unjust customs, and does not thunder its disapproval of these monstrous wrongs—that church is a delusion and a sham. Jesus was a friend of the poor, the homeless, the landless, the friendless; he sought companionship with that class; he profoundly sympathized with them; he it was who denounced the rich Pharisee and drove the money-changers from the temple; he it was who never gave utterance to other than mild, kind, loving and sympathetic words except when he spoke of their business methods, and then his utterances of denunciation were vehement and terrible.

"I deeply regret, friend Batty, your doubts as to conscious existence of man after so-called death. The Bible, as well as the sacred writings of other peoples, abound with proof of the immortality of the soul. But if you cannot accept those writings as furnishing proof of the fact because those proofs have not come to you personally, why not give credence to the testimony of thousands of witnesses who live now who say they know their departed ones still live, for they see them with clairvoyant eye, and hear them with clairaudient ear. There are hundreds of intelligent, trustworthy people, many of them distinguished for learning, whose probity of character none would question, who solemnly declare that either through the powers of clairvoyance or clairaudience, or after the most searching investigation of the powers of others, they know as certainly as they can know anything, that the departed still live and can, under proper conditions, communicate their thoughts to those still in this physical body. There are many hundreds of thou-

sands of men and women, known as Spiritualists, many of whom are truthful, reliable, upright people, who steadfastly maintain that they are in possession of this positive knowledge. Among the believers in Spiritualism were Victor Hugo, Alfred R. Wallace, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Prof. Elliott Coues, Camile Flammarion, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Frances P. Willard, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Benjamin F. Wade, Judge Edmonds, Abraham Lincoln, Rev. Minot Savage, Prof. Hyslop and scores of other distinguished persons. There is scarcely a city, town or village in Europe or America, where one or more mediums may not be found who profess to be in possession of proof positive that the so-called dead live and do sometimes communicate with those on this side of the grave. Committees of learned men have, after the most patient and exhaustive investigation of Spiritualism, reported that much marvelous phenomena occurs, and that they can account for it on no known hypothesis other than that it is caused by an unseen intelligence. Many dying persons testify that their spiritual eyes are opened and they behold their spirit friends.

"But, friend Batty, laying aside the proofs of the Bible, and taking no account of Spiritualism, can you not see that the universe would be a colossal failure—a stupendous farce—if so-called death ended man's existence? You are too intelligent to say that the billions of suns and planets rushing through space with the velocity of a cannonball, separated by millions of miles, all moving with precision and in perfect harmony one with another, could have come by chance. You will, I am sure, concede that there is over-

whelming evidence above us, below us, around us, and in us—aye, in every hair of our heads, in every drop of our blood, in our eyes, and ears, our internal organs, in our every part, that infinite wisdom is at the helm of things. You must admit that our minds—our intelligence—is still more wonderful than our physical bodies. We think, we reason, we remember, we love; we enjoy the beautiful; we are enraptured by music; we originate; we plan; we invent; we have intuition, likes and dislikes, and, unless warped or twisted by theological dogmas, or are thrown off our balance by some false system of reasoning, we feel that we—our real selves—are something more than flesh and blood and bones, and that we shall never be obliterated. Every tribe, kindred and tongue that have lived in all the past have believed that they would live after death, and that is an argument of great force that they shall do so, for such a faith is implanted in our very being. Friend Batty, this mortal existence is but the starting place of conscious, intelligent beings; this world is the vestibule, the kindergarten, the bottom rung of a ladder the highest rung of which is such an inconceivable distance above that it is beyond—perhaps infinitely beyond the last resting place of our wildest fancy. We shall ascend that ladder, step by step, rung by rung, as we fit ourselves to ascend, and we shall have all eternity in which to make the ascent. We can no more die than can God, for we are a part of God. And now here I anticipate your question, for you would ask if we are to live forever, then have we not always existed? My answer is that we have always existed in some form, or in many forms, but never as a

conscious personality till we came to consciousness in a human body. As God is the sum total of all things in the universe, visible and invisible, the particles of matter that now compose our bodies always existed but not in their present form. They were a part of God for God is All. The spark of spirit—of God—which has always existed, that was at my conception lodged in a physical body, had never before been incarnated in human form, hence had no conscious personal-existence before my birth on the earth plane. Myriads of divine sparks have been incarnated in material bodies and gained a conscious personality and will retain it forever. Other myriads are awaiting to be incarnated. The supply can never be exhausted for the unlimited—the infinite—cannot be exhausted. There must be involution before there is evolution. The very idea of evolution presupposes something already in existence. Where did that something from which other things evolved come from? I answer it came from the infinite self-existent ocean of matter and of mind. The substance composing everything in the universe always existed. Not a particle was ever created but the eternal energies inherent in all things, are ceaselessly at work forming and reforming substance into infinitely diversified forms and shapes. There could be no 'spontaneous generation' followed by evolution, for there would have to be something before evolution could begin to work.

"The hitherto unconscious human germ, proceeding in accordance with the perfect law of nature, comes in contact with matter and the work of evolution, of unfoldment begins, and a

conscious soul is born, and the journey to inconceivable joy and glory begins. At so-called death the spirit, the life, the divine spark, casts off the grosser shell, retaining a finer material but to us an invisible body, and rises to a more refined material plane, for matter exists in planes of varied degrees of refinement. The highest spheres of heaven are composed of a material substance, though invisible to eye of mortal, for were it not so there could be no heaven. Intelligent beings could not exist in a heaven of nothingness. An infinite ocean of ether infills the illimitable universe. It contains, and has from all eternity contained, the germs of every human being ever born of woman or who will ever be born, in the ages to come.

"Look aloft, my friend! Cast your pessimistic thoughts to the winds. Open your eyes, throw wide open the windows of your soul, and know that you are a child of God—that you are a part of God—that you are God. Learn that you are deathless, and not only deathless but that you have within you the potentialities and possibilities which will unfold more, and still more, till you have attained to that degree of power, and wisdom, and harmony, and goodness, and joy which is now beyond the power of mortal man to conceive. Though in this kindergarten state you toil, and suffer, and weep; though disappointments, and sickness, and sorrows may surge all about you and over you; though crushed by poverty, deserted by your kind, cast out and trampled upon, and beaten, and bruised, and killed, you shall some time, somewhere, clap your hands and shout for joy that you were taken out of the in-

finite ocean of impersonal spirit, incarnated in matter, given a consciousness of an individual existence, and was started on the glorious journey to ineffable glory. You shall yet step from star to star, fly with the velocity of thought to the blazing suns in the vast depths of infinite space, and sit in counsel with the mighty intelligences of the glorious courts of heaven."

CHAPTER VIII.

ASHTON CONFESSES HIS LOVE FOR LILLIE HIGSBEE, BUT DOES NOT KNOW IF SHE WERE RESCUED.

Frequent were the meetings between Ashton and Batty and earnest were their deliberations as to their future course. They were now nearing the coast of China and soon the Roswell would reach her destination. The all-absorbing thought haunting the brain of Engineer Ashton was concerning Lilly. Had her boat been picked up by some passing ship, and is she safe and well, or, oh, the horror of the thought, did she die from exposure, or starvation or illness, or had she been lost by the overturning of the little craft? If she were alive what steps should he take to find her? All these questions daily, almost hourly, crowded themselves upon the young man. Batty deeply sympathized with his friend. The attachment between the two men had grown stronger and stronger, till now the perplexities and sorrows of one became matters of the deepest concern to the other. As witness to, and custodian of, the last

will of Colonel Higsbee, Mr. Batty not only knew of the engagement of his friend with Lilly Higsbee, but realized that it was his official duty to search for the widow and child of the testator. He also felt a profound interest in his friend, and for his sake alone was more than willing to devote his time and energies in instituting an exhaustive search for the two women. After many meetings and discussions of the situation in all its phases, the men decided that soon after the landing of the Roswell in Hong Kong as might be possible, both would take passage on the first steamer for America, where they would begin a search for Mrs. and Miss Higsbee, and continue it unremittingly till the object of their search was found or their fate ascertained.

In due time the steamer landed at her destination and the two men walked down the gangplank and stood upon terra firma in a Chinese city.

CHAPTER IX.

MISS HIGSBEE'S EXPERIENCE WITH THOMAS LAWSON, WHO PROPOSES MARRIAGE.

By this time the reader no doubt is anxious to know something more about Mrs. Higsbee, her daughter Lilly, and Thomas Lawson. It will be remembered we left them on board of the Josephine, bound for Portland, Oregon. Mrs. Higsbee had quite bravely endured the hardships through which she had passed, but a reaction

from a condition of a high nervous strain came quickly after the rescue. Her fears for the safety of her husband had almost overwhelmed her; she was inconsolable and ill. The anxiety of Lilly for the welfare of her father and her lover was also most intense, but she bore up heroically, and she assumed a hopeful, cheerful manner and gave her mother constant and loving attention. She reassured herself and her mother that, as they had been rescued, so might the other boats be. "It was not," she said, "far distant from the shore where the shipwreck occurred; they were in the track of many steamers passing to and from San Francisco. Distant steamers had been seen. Surely some of them had picked up the other boats." God is good, and she would trust Him and, though great sorrow and fear took possession of her at times, yet she would hope they might again meet their loved ones. Added to her anxiety was the enforced attention of Lawson. Every day, and several times a day, he would call and inquire as to her mother's condition, expressing as he did so his sympathies for the elder lady and offering his services. She treated him coolly, but her mother was pleased at his apparent interest in her welfare. On one occasion, when Mrs. Higsbee was feeling better than usual, she called her daughter to her bedside and said:

"My dear Lilly, I may not be with you long. I feel that this great misfortune will so crush me that I shall never recover. I fear, oh, how I fear, that your dear father has gone from us forever. He has been swallowed up by the sea," and then sobs and a flood of tears for a time prevented further utterance. Regaining partially her com-

posure, she resumed: "If I should die, as I feel I shall, you will be alone in the world. Poor child! Your parents gone, to whom will you go for advice and protection. Sorely will you stand in need of an adviser and protector. Now, my dear, I recognize in Mr. Lawson the cultured, honorable gentleman; he loves you; he has so declared to me; he is wealthy; he has great ability and comes from a most noble family. He informs me you do not reciprocate his love—that you do not care for him and I have myself observed an expression of indifference toward him on your part. I deeply regret this. You have always been a good, obedient and loving child. You have never refused to grant my request. I know you will not refuse now, when I ask you to treat him with greater consideration, to encourage his attentions, and if he proposes marriage, to accept him."

After the utterance of her mother's first sentence, Lilly had a presentment of what was coming. She sat like a statue holding the invalid by the hand. Her gaze was fixed at vacancy and was averted from her mother's face, and her heart throbbed violently. At the conclusion of her mother's remarks, she bent over and tenderly kissed her, then, dropping to her knees by the bedside, hid her face on her mother's bosom and wept, but uttered not a word in reply. For several minutes she continued in this attitude, and, until a rap on the door of the stateroom aroused her. She arose to her feet and answered the summons by opening the door and ushering in the ship's physician, who had called professionally.

Contrary to her own predictions, Mrs. Higsbee

steadily improved from day to day, and when the Josephine reached Portland, though far from being well, she had regained considerable of her former physical strength, notwithstanding the deep mental depression and gloom which still enshrouded her.

Five days after the rescue of Mrs. and Miss Higsbee and Thomas Lawson by the Josephine, they stepped upon the wharf of the principal city of Oregon.

Though Colonel Higsbee had spared no expense in giving his daughter a thorough education in one of the best institutions of learning in Australia, and though she had read much and traveled considerably, and possessed an intelligent mind, yet she knew nothing whatever of the city of Portland except in the most general way. On all former journeys her father, who had always accompanied her on her travels, attended to the purchase of tickets, looked after baggage, selected hotels, etc., and had relieved his wife and daughter of all responsibility and care about such things. Now Lilly awakened to a realization of the weighty responsibility that rested upon her alone. All plans matured before leaving home had been destroyed; her father was gone; her mother was ill, and she had found herself in a strange city and in a foreign land. This would be enough to bring dismay to many; but the great responsibility thus thrust upon this young girl, instead of crushing her, aroused her latent spirit of independence and courage. Looking over a list of the names of Portland hotels, she selected one, and, with her mother, entered a hack and gave orders to be driven to that hostelry. On ar-

riving there, and after suitable quarters had been assigned them, and she had made her mother as comfortable as circumstances would permit, she repaired to the office to ascertain if any passengers from the wrecked Osceola had been rescued other than those brought in by the Josephine. At her request the hotel clerk secured a file of a city paper for the past week, and handed them to her. They contained but one account of the rescue of passengers. This item stated, in effect, that an eastern-bound steamer had picked up one boatload of passengers and crew from the ill-fated Osceola, and the day before had landed them at San Francisco. A full list of names of those brought in was printed, but not one of them had Miss Higsbee heard before. With a heavy heart she rejoined her mother bearing the sad tidings that nothing was yet known on land of the fate of Colonel Higsbee, Henry Ashton, and their companions. They mingled their tears together and spent the remainder of the day in close seclusion. Every morning for three weeks Miss Higsbee snatched the newspaper from the hands of the delivery boy and eagerly scanned the news columns, hoping, praying that they might contain information of the rescue of her father and Henry Ashton, but every day she was compelled, with tears in her eyes, to lay down the paper without finding what she was so very anxious to see. Hope with both mother and daughter began to give way to despondency, and the two nearly heartbroken women were settling down to the conviction that their loved ones had indeed been separated from them forever.

Before leaving the Josephine, Tom Lawson

had made several attempts to engage Miss Higsbee in conversation, but had succeeded only in extorting from her a few commonplace remarks and she had for her mother's sake, treated him with less coolness of manner than when they were first taken into the small boat, yet by her dignified and reserved manner she kept him at a proper distance. For about three weeks after Miss Higsbee and her mother had taken up their temporary abode at the hotel, they saw nothing of Lawson, and Lilly hoped that he had abandoned all further attempts to win her favor.

Now let us follow Lawson and ascertain his location and investigate his conduct since the day he left the Josephine. This was not the first time he had been in Portland. Two years before he had left that city in the night time because he was wanted by the police to answer to a complaint of a miner who made the charge that he had swindled him out of a considerable sum of money. He now reasoned that he might be recognized; it would therefore be best, he thought, to keep pretty well under cover. He accordingly sought quarters in a section of the city where he would be most likely to escape recognition. He secured rooms in an obscure lodging house, and for a time, remained closely in doors during the daytime. In the evening, disguised, he cautiously ventured to go on to the street and visit such resorts to which his natural inclination drew him. His funds were distressingly depleted on his arrival in the city, but being an expert with cards it was not long before he was pretty well supplied with money. But his thoughts were centered on Lilly Higsbee and her fortune. For

hours at a time he would sit quietly in his rooms thinking what scheme he might concoct and carry into execution, that would secure to him the girl and her property. If he could marry her he might easily obtain possession of her fortune, or most of it. He would prefer the money without the girl, but he would marry her if necessary to secure the property. If he were certain that Col. Higsbee would never again turn up, the situation would be less complex. He hoped that the Colonel and Ashton were both at the bottom of the sea. In that case the solution of the problem would be much easier. If he could marry the girl and her father would later put in an appearance, his ends would be accomplished for he would so win the favor of his father-in-law that he could soon be in control of most of his earthly possessions. One day after a season of earnest thinking over the situation, he suddenly sprang to his feet and ejaculated:

"I have it! I have it! I will cause a report to be printed to the effect that information has been received that the boat in which Col. Higsbee and Henry Ashton made their escape from the wreck of the Osceola, was capsized and was discovered by a vessel, and that all who were aboard of the little craft were lost. That I can show to Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly and all their hope of ever again seeing the Colonel and my rival, will be crushed. The women are in a strange country —are helpless and despondent. When they realize that they are thousands of miles from home, and have not a single acquaintance in America except myself, they will gladly accept my friendly overtures. I have already captured the elder

lady, and the proud, haughty daughter will soon surrender. Good enough, Tom Lawson! You are a mighty clever fellow; you deserve the hand and fortune of Lilly Higsbee for inventing so fine a scheme and both shall yet be yours."

Procuring pen and paper Lawson wrote the following:

"Yesterday some fishermen off the coast of Santa Cruz found a small boat floating in the water bottom up. They towed it to shore when upon closer examination, they found on the side in painted letters, the words: Str. Osceola. The fishermen, at first, supposed that it contained nothing, but a little later a fragment of a smooth board was noticed fastened to a crosspiece by a string, which contained some pencil scratches, which proved to be writing. After more study the words were deciphered and read as follows:

" 'We are of the wrecked steamer, Osceola. Seven in number. Col. James Higsbee, of Melbourne, is one of us. We have little or no hope of rescue.

'(Signed) HENRY ASHTON,'

"There," said Lawson to himself. "That is superb. I will have that printed in a little slip at some obscure printing office in type and on paper similar to those used by newspapers. I will take it to Mrs. and Miss Higsbee, show it to them, and tell them I clipped it from a Santa Cruz paper. That will do the business. Tom Lawson, old fellow, I congratulate you. Your battle for a fortune and a wife has been half won already!"

Lawson, without any unnecessary delay, proceeded to carry his scheme into execution, and

forty-eight hours had not passed before he called upon the Higsbees with the printed slip in his pocket.

Mrs. Higsbee had grown calmer and was slowly regaining physical strength. He found her in the parlor and after greeting the elderly lady, and offering congratulations on her improved appearance, and vouchsafing apologies for his failure for not calling before, he was informed that Lilly had gone out for a short walk in the fresh air and the invigorating sunshine. This was a situation quite satisfactory to Lawson. Mrs. Higsbee was already favorably impressed with him and now he would have a good opportunity to strengthen that impression, and, through the mother, he hoped to influence the daughter. She extended her hand to him and exclaimed:

"Oh, I am so glad to see you, Mr. Lawson! Beside Lilly, you are the only friend I have in America. Why have you remained away from us so long? I have been so very anxious to see and consult you. Have you gained any information about my husband, favorable or otherwise? Oh, do speak if you have heard any thing about him. I feel that I cannot much longer endure this awful suspense."

Assuming an honest expression of countenance, and carefully controlling the intonations of his voice, Lawson replied: "My dear Mrs. Higsbee, I hope you will pardon me for my apparent neglect. Circumstances were such that it was well nigh impossible for me to see you sooner. I thought of you and Lilly every hour since I last saw you. I came to see you at the very first moment possible. I have been pressed by busi-

ness engagements. My time has been wholly occupied. My American agent, a few years ago, invested quite large amounts of my money in Oregon lands, also in bank, railroad, and other stocks in this and neighboring cities, and I have been examining the properties and adjusting several important financial matters that required my prompt attention. Again I beg you to forgive my apparent neglect of you and your lovely daughter. But you ask me as to the latest information that may have been received regarding your husband. It gives me pain, intense pain, dear Mrs. Higsbee, to inform you that information has been received and—and I hesitate to say, it is not of a cheerful nature. Indeed it is otherwise. It is well to be prepared for the worst. This life is filled with disappointments and sorrows, and you, my dear friend, seem to be destined to experience more than your just share of them. I have important information for you; I came here to impart it to you but my courage almost fails me. I fear that Col. Higsbee has been lost. In truth it is almost a certainty that he has been. To-day I clipped from a Santa Cruz, California, newspaper, an item which seems to almost settle the question. I have the item in my hand; here it is? I solemnly assure you that I feel the most intense sympathy for you and Lilly. Summon all your courage and remember that it was God's will and His ways are inscrutable and past finding out."

Lawson handed her the printed slip. She hurriedly read it, gave a scream and dropped the paper upon the floor. For several minutes she was nearly overcome by grief. While she had,

ever since the shipwreck been partially prepared for such information, yet when it came and hope of again meeting her husband was dashed from her forever, the shock was too great, and she gave her herself up to paroxysms of grief. Lawson stepped to the door and summoned assistance and the grief-stricken woman was removed to her room. Leaving her in charge of attendants he withdrew and soon disappeared.

When Lilly returned she found her mother in deep sorrow but much more composed mentally, than when Lawson left. In a few words, and between sobs, Mrs. Higsbee informed her daughter of Lawson's call, of what he had said about finding the item in the newspaper and she then handed the clipping to Lilly. Miss Higsbee was less emotional than her mother, but when she had finished perusing the printing upon the little slip, she burst into a flood of tears, threw herself upon her mother's neck and the two women gave themselves up to unutterable grief.

CHAPTER X.

MRS. HIGSBEE URGES LILLY TO BECOME THE WIFE OF LAWSON.

A few days after the occurrence of the events mentioned in the preceding chapter, Mrs. Higsbee said:

"Come, my dear child, sit down beside me, and let us have a talk as to our future. We must

decide what we shall do. I have been thinking the matter over. One of two plans I think we should adopt: First, is to return to Melbourne on the next steamer; or second, to proceed to Omaha and adjust your father's business and after that is attended to sail for home. Oh, what an irretrievable loss we have suffered! What sorrow and misfortune has been inflicted upon us! We are now called upon to decide important questions, to grapple with which I feel we are both incompetent. I know nothing of business methods, neither do you. I am totally ignorant about courts and law, and so are you. Mr. Batty, your father's attorney, to whose charge the management of this American business was intrusted, has no doubt shared the same fate as your father. He too is gone. The business at Omaha is important—so important that to attend to which was the main purpose of your father's journey to America.

"I feel that we are helpless. That business must be unattended to unless we can secure the services of some one in whom we can repose confidence, to whom we can intrust it. I have thought, dear daughter, of but one who might, at our solicitation, act as our friend. That person is Mr. Thomas Lawson. As he was acquainted with your father, and because of his ardent love for you, and his very high regard for me, I feel that he would most cheerfully consent to become our friend and adviser, although I know that his time is fully occupied in looking after his own large financial affairs. Yes, Lilly, I have decided; I shall express my desire to him that he take charge of our affairs and yet, my

dear, I could not ignore and override any serious objection you might urge. What have you to say as to my suggestion? What do you think of it. Again: When we left home it was our intention to remain abroad a year and your father arranged affairs in Melbourne to that end, and I now feel since our great bereavement that I could the better endure our affliction in America during that time than I could if I returned to our desolated home.

"Dear mother," replied the girl, "Our situation is indeed a painful one. Our dilemma is as you portray it. We are far from home and in a strange land. Our loved ones are gone from us forever. Were it not for you, dear mother, I would welcome death myself. But I must live for you. You are all I have, and for your sake, your happiness, I will live and labor, and if necessary suffer. Your wish shall be my law. I do not share your belief that Mr. Lawson is the noble, good man that you picture him. I can never love him. My love was, and still is for another and his body lies at the bottom of the sea, or ere this, has become food for the fishes. For your sake, dear mother, I shall treat Mr. Lawson courteously—even kindly, and if it be your desire, and I know it is, I will accept his proposal of marriage, and will be to him a faithful and dutiful wife, but I shall tell him as I now tell you, that I have no love for him and never shall have. If I consent to marry him that consent must be given on one condition and that is that the ceremony shall not take place for one year from the date of engagement. This condition I make that I may ascertain to a certainty whether

Henry Ashton is among the living or the dead, though this reason for the postponement of the wedding I shall mention to none but you."

There was but little further conversation between mother and daughter on the subject. Mrs. Higsbee made some effort to protract the discussion in which she again declared that she had unwavering faith in the honor of Thomas Lawson, and expressed the belief that Lilly would find him to be such a devoted and loving husband that she would soon learn to love him even if she thought she could not now, but to all this the girl made no reply, or if she did her answers were short and evasive and at the close of the conversation her mother believed that she had made a decided impression on her daughter in Lawson's favor.

On all occasions prior to this time when Lawson met Mrs. Higsbee while she greeted him with considerable cordiality there was yet a perceptible restraint on her part which left him in doubt whether her geniality was due to innate politeness, or, was prompted by a genuine friendliness. That doubt was removed from his mind when he called the day after the conversation alluded to between Lilly and her mother. Now, Mrs. Higsbee unreservedly uncovers all her plans, seeks his advice, and in the most artless and confiding spirit, talks to him as if he were a near relative or a trusted life-long friend. She rehearsed to him much of the conversation that had taken place the day before between Lilly and herself and frankly solicited him to become their confidential counselor and protector, and, continued the confiding lady, "I am more than grat-

ified to be able to assure you, Mr. Lawson, that Lilly acquiesces in this proposition to you."

As Mrs. Higsbee closed these remarks Tom Lawson's eyes glistened with delight and he inwardly chuckled with joy. This was a condition of things to accomplish which he had been scheming for several weeks. So far, his plans had worked most admirably. Now he knew that the elder lady was completely under his influence and in his power; but he was not yet sure of the daughter. He remembered that she had not, by word or sign, betrayed any evidence that she was in accord with her mother in the proposition made him by that lady. She might be in error in supposing that Lilly was entirely favorable to this arrangement; however, he thought to himself, "I am making good progress and through the mother I will yet capture the girl." Assuming an air of honest frankness Lawson replied:

"My dear friends, this is a great surprise to me, but I assure you, a most pleasant one. Though I am a very busy man I shall deem it a great pleasure and privilege to serve you in the way you have suggested, or in any other way you may desire. I have, from the beginning of our acquaintance, entertained the profoundest regard for Col. Higsbee as well as for yourself, Madam." Turning to Lilly and making a bow, he said: "Those words conveying sentiments of friendship do not adequately express my feelings towards you, Miss Higsbee. You cannot have been unaware of the maddening love I have entertained for you. I gladly accept the trust that has been placed in my keeping and it shall be my highest aim to faithfully serve you and demonstrate to

you how constant, devoted, and undying my love is for you."

As Lawson finished, Miss Higsbee calmly and firmly said:

"Mr. Lawson, circumstances of a very painful nature have conspired to place my mother and myself under very unhappy conditions. We are in a strange land, are discouraged, ill and heart-broken from the terrible events of the past few weeks which have enshrouded us both in inexpressible sorrow. We stand in need of a counselor and friend. Mother has selected you and requested you to be such to us. I acquiesce; I defer to her judgment. I shall interpose no objections to her choice of that friend. As to your declaration of love for me, I prefer to say but little now. At a later time I may talk to you more freely. It is due, however, to myself and to you that I frankly inform you that I have loved, but the object of my affection is no more. I cannot now give you an unqualified promise that I shall ever love another and take upon myself the marriage vows. If I should at some future time consent to marry, and my feelings have undergone no change, I shall frankly say to the man who would take me for his life companion, that while I might entertain respect for him, might honor him, might even admire him, I could not love him. I cannot, if I would, control my own heart. It was given to another. Even the knowledge that he has gone to the great mysterious beyond makes no change in my affection for him. Love does not stop at the grave. It leaps across the great chasm and follows its

object to the most distant part of the infinite universe. Do not ask me to say more now."

At the conclusion of these words she arose from her seat, bowed to Lawson, and left the room.

After some further conversation with Mrs. Higsbee in which the future movements of the three were discussed, Lawson retired, promising to call again on the following morning. He went directly to his rooms and spent the remainder of the day in maturing his plans.

"The first step to be taken," said that rogue to himself, "will be to get written authority from Mrs. Higsbee investing me with legal power to transact her business in Omaha. With that I can get possession of a large sum of money by compromising the suit now pending in which Col. James Higsbee is a litigant. But to successfully work this scheme I must see to it that neither the old lady nor the girl shall personally visit Omaha, for if they do, they might in some way become apprised of my methods. No; I must go alone. Let me see! Yes, I will advise them to either remain here, or if they wish to change locations, to proceed to San Francisco, Los Angeles or some other place; but the first thing to be done is to get the proper legal papers.

CHAPTER XI.

LAWSON IS GIVEN LEGAL AUTHORITY TO SETTLE COL. HIGSBEE'S BUSINESS AFFAIRS.

After considerable deliberation, Lawson procured writing materials and drew up the following power of attorney:

"Know all men by these presents; That we, the undersigned, Mary Higsbee, widow, and Lilly Higsbee, daughter, and only surviving heir of James Higsbee, deceased, late of Melbourne, Australia, do hereby, by these presents, appoint Thomas Lawson our agent and attorney in fact, and authorize and empower him to transact all business in our name pertaining to a certain suit in law now pending in the courts of Omaha, Nebraska, entitled, James Higsbee vs. The Burlington & Missouri River R. R. Co., exercising all the legal rights and powers including the right to prosecute or compromise said suit, with which we, or either of us, are invested by law, as the only living representatives and beneficiaries of the said James Higsbee, deceased."

"There," said Lawson to himself, "If I can secure the signatures of the two women to that, it will be worth $40,000 or $50,000 to me. On the strength of that legal document I will compromise and settle the law suit and will realize a good sum by reason of my cleverness. If I can, later on, marry the girl, I will get a good deal bigger rake-off, but if anything happens to prevent the wedding a cool $40,000 will help me to endure my disappointment."

Early the next morning Lawson presented himself at the rooms of Mrs. Higsbee and found both the ladies in. After the usual greetings were over Lawson, assuming an attitude of dignity, and speaking as one who had had great business experience said:

"Ladies, I have a paper to present to you to which I desire you to append your names. You have done me the honor to designate me as your adviser and agent. You have asked me to look after your business affairs, and I have accepted the trust and feel highly honored at this manifestation of your confidence in my ability and integrity. You doubtless are aware of the fact that in order to properly discharge my duties as your representative, I must have the proper credentials in writing—in fact I must have in my possession what in law is termed a power of attorney. Here is the instrument which only lacks your signatures to make it of force and effect." He drew the paper from his pocket, spread it on the table before Mrs. Higsbee and stepped a short distance aside.

"Certainly," responded Mrs. Higsbee, "I can readily see the necessity for such an instrument. Adjusting her spectacles she perused the writing, and picking up a pen, appended her name to the paper, saying as she did so, "My dear Mr. Lawson, I am so glad you have consented to take the responsibility of acting as our agent and adviser. I shall trust you and rely upon you most implicitly. How shall we ever repay you for your great kindness?" She handed the paper to her daughter who wrote her name below that of her mother and folding the paper, handed it back to

Lawson, but she made no remarks. Lawson lost no time in putting the paper safely in his pocket.

"From what I have learned," he said, "of the status of your business in Omaha, my opinion is that it requires immediate attention. Now, as it is my purpose to start for Chicago to-morrow, to attend to some important business in that city, I think it would be advisable for me to stop off in Nebraska and enquire into your affairs there. I shall start to-morrow at 10:30 a. m. My advice to you is that you remain in Portland until I return, or, if you prefer a change, that you go to San Francisco and there await my arrival from the East."

"We shall do as you suggest, Mr. Lawson," replied Mrs. Higsbee, and will proceed to San Francisco within a week or two, as I think I would prefer to make that city my temporary home rather than Portland."

"You are quite right," said Lawson. "San Francisco is a great metropolis and possesses many more attractions to the visitor than this or any other city on the Pacific coast; and now, as I will have some preparations to make before starting on my contemplated journey, I will ask you to excuse me; I will, if time permits, make a short call on you in the morning, but if I do not, I beg of you that you do not think that I did not care to call, but account for such failure on the grounds that I could not possibly spare the time in which to drop in. I bid you both good night, and may each succeeding day find you feeling better and happier."

So saying, Lawson shook hands with the ladies, bowed himself out, and disappeared.

Mrs. Higsbee was pleased at the turn of events. She felt that a great load of care and responsibility had been lifted from her. She was a woman of a confiding nature and her confidence in Thomas Lawson was most implicit. True she knew nothing about him, or his antecedents, and had heard nothing except what Lawson himself had told her, but she believed him and trusted him. Her daughter was in many respects her superior. She was more intellectual naturally than her mother, and intuition was more largely developed in her. Her first impressions of Lawson were not favorable to him. She could not say that she had observed any act on his part that was unbecoming a gentleman and an honorable man, except his conduct at the time of the wrecking of the Osceola. His cowardice and selfishness manifested at that time, had created a decided aversion toward him. She had never admired him, but had treated him with courtesy solely to please her mother, and she had consented to his choice as adviser and friend and had signed the power of attorney, not because she had confidence in his integrity so much, as she had a desire to please her mother, to whom she was devotedly attached.

The following morning Mrs. Higsbee remembered that she had forgotten to hand to Mr. Lawson some legal papers pertaining to the suit pending in Omaha which had fortunately been saved from the wreck, having been among some of her personal belongings. She had expected him to call for a final good-bye as he had said he might do, but as the morning wore away and he did not make his appearance, she

decided to walk to the depot, but a block distant, and deliver the papers before his departure. Upon declaring her intention, Lilly remarked that she would accompany her mother and take a little needed exercise in the morning air.

The train was scheduled to leave at 10:30 a. m. Quite a number of passengers had already arrived preparatory to the taking of the train. As Lawson had not yet made his appearance the two ladies took a seat in the waiting room near an open window. A few moments later Lawson alighted from a hack near them but did not notice them. While giving orders as to the checking of his baggage, a young man stepped forward and addressed him, saying:

"Look here, Mr. Lawson, I see you are about to leave the city, you have forgotten to pay me that $1.50 for that little job of printing I did for you."

"What printing?" said Lawson. "I did have two or three little jobs done at your office, but I paid you for them. I don't owe you anything."

"Yes you do," warmly responded the printer. "You owe me for the last job, for printing that little slip containing some reading matter about an empty boat being found near Santa Cruz belonging to the wrecked Osceola."

"All right," said Lawson, lowering his voice, "but I thought I had paid you. Here is your money; I quite forgot it. That's all right. Don't forget though, that that was a private, confidential business transaction. No outside talk about it, remember!"

"All right," said the printer, as he received his dues, mounted his bicycle and rode away.

Miss Higsbee, who was sitting nearest the open window, heard the entire conversation, but her mother, whose attention was directed elsewhere, overheard nothing that transpired between the men. Soon after this on going to the door she saw that Lawson had arrived, when she delivered the papers to him just as the conductor of the train gave the signal to start.

As the two women returned to their hotel Mrs. Higsbee seemed much more cheerful than at any time since her great bereavement, but Lilly was more reticent than usual. Her mother talked of their intended trip to the southward, of certain wearing apparel to be purchased, and wondered if they would find San Francisco so congenial to them that they would be contented to remain in that city for several months. Lilly heard but little of what her mother was saying. That conversation at the depot between Lawson and the printer was still ringing in her ears. Almost audibly she thought: What did that young man mean when he said. "The bill is for printing that slip about an empty boat being found belonging to the steamer Osceola." Can it be possible that no such account was ever printed in a newspaper, that no such empty boat was found, that what purported to be the writing of Henry Ashton on a little bit of wood was a wicked forgery? Can it be that Thomas Lawson is a villian and that we are his victims? Oh, if that was all a lie, then my beloved may not be dead; then my dear father may be alive, and if they are, we may yet be reunited. But no, no, that cannot be. They are not among the living for if they are they would have sought and found

us ere this. The article shown us by Lawson, giving an account of the finding of the empty boat, must have been true, and the bill for the printing must have been for something else. It may be that my ears deceived me. It may be that the grief I have recently suffered has in some measure disordered my mind, and yet I thought I distinctly heard the printer say that "the bill is for printing that slip containing reading matter, something about an empty boat being found that belonged to the Osceola."

For many days Miss Higsbee pondered over the matter. Sometimes she believed that Tom Lawson was a villian and had concocted a cunning lie about the finding of the boat, and that her father and Ashton might still be alive, while at other times she succumbed to despondent thoughts and reasoned that she might have misunderstood the meaning of the conversation between Lawson and the printer. In her calmer moments when mentally more composed and harmonious, she seemed to have an intuition or impression that Lawson was not a man to be trusted.

During the next two weeks nothing of especial interest transpired affecting Mrs. Higsbee and daughter. They had made no acquaintances in Portland. They left their rooms only as they went out for a promenade and to secure the benefit of the fresh air and sunlight and to change the monotony of existence. The time appointed for their departure for San Francisco drew nigh. But little preparation was necessary for the journey, and on the fifteenth day after Lawson left Portland, they were on their way to the great metropolis of the Pacific coast. They arrived in

the city in the morning, and spent several hours in seeking a lodging place to their liking. This they succeeded in doing with but little inconvenience or trouble and in due time found themselves pleasantly located in a suite of rooms in a quiet and well conducted hotel on Ellis street. Though much of the time they were weighed down by their deep sorrow, yet, they went out nearly every day visiting the parks and other places of interest with which the city is so generously supplied. They took short and frequent excursions across the bay to Alameda, located on an island, and one of the most delightful cities of North America, and to the various pleasure resorts near by. This was their routine life for several weeks with little to disturb its monotony. Two or three letters had been received from Thomas Lawson written at Omaha. In the first one he stated that he had safely arrived and would proceed without delay to attend to the business entrusted to his care. Subsequent ones were addressed to Mrs. Higsbee or to Lilly which were, for the greater part, devoted to declarations of love; undying love, for Miss Lilly and the profoundest respect for her mother.

CHAPTER XII.

LAWSON LOSES AT OMAHA A LARGE SUM OF MONEY —VICTIMIZED BY GAMBLERS.

Let the reader now, for a time, take leave of Mrs. Higsbee and her daughter, and go with the writer to Omaha, and make note of the movements of Lawson. We may be assured that that accomplished rogue is not idle. On arriving in that city and getting located, he began immediately to inform himself as to the status of the law case of "James Higsbee vs. The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad Company." He called upon the chief attorney of that corporation and exhibited to him the power of attorney by the widow and daughter of the late Jas. Higsbee, and during his interview with that official inadvertently remarked that he had come to the city with instructions to push the case to trial immediately, and if necessary to carry it to the Supreme Court of the State and of the United States, and that he had been supplied with all the funds that might be necessary to carry on the litigation to the highest tribunal. "This bold bluffing," he reasoned to himself, "will frighten the railway official and cause him to make some overtures looking to a compromise. He calculated correctly, for after several interviews and the exercise of no small amount of strategy on both sides, the corporation proposed to pay the widow and heirs of James Higsbee the sum of $38,500, if Mr. Lawson, their legal representative, would

withdraw the suit. Besides this sum they would pay in full the accrued costs. For several days Lawson insisted upon the payment of $50,000, and costs, but finally accepted the company's offer and settled the litigation. Within ten days after his arrival in Omaha Lawson received a check for $38,500, when he withdrew the suit and made the proper entries showing full settlement on the court docket.

Tom Lawson now had plenty of money and he proposed to enjoy himself. Never before had he got possession of so large a sum of money with so little trouble, and by methods which could not by any stretch of imagination get him into any serious difficulty. Did he not have the proper legal authority from Mrs. Higsbee and her daughter, to adjust this business in any manner that his judgment approved? Certainly. "I have," said Lawson to himself, "heretofore committed forgeries and thus raised the cash, but this time my authority was proper and legal. My power of attorney was all right," and as he said this, he approvingly and gleefully slapped himself, and ejaculated: "By thunder, Tom Lawson, that was smooth work; it took cleverness to hatch out that little scheme and to carry it into execution, but you had the brains and the courage to do it. There is nobody to make me trouble about it except old Mrs. Higsbee, the simple old goose, and Lilly, the pretty lassie that she is, but I can manage them. Still, if the old Colonel or that Lawyer Batty should turn up, or Ashton, that hated rival of mine, they might annoy me some, but it has now been several weeks since the shipwreck, and they would have

put in an appearance before this time if they had been picked up and are alive. No, no, they went to the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, that's pretty certain. Poor, old, silly Mrs. Higsbee, and dear, pretty, lovely Lilly, they have been sure of it since that sleek work of mine in showing them the printed slip which gave an account of the finding of the empty boat."

As Thomas Lawson is a prominent character in this history of the wrecking of the Osceola, our readers doubtless have a curiosity to know something of his early life and antecedents. But little is known of him by the one who was engaged to write this story, till after he had attained to young manhood. This much was learned: He was the son of a clergyman in an interior town of New Jersey, and left home at an early age, and soon after the death of his mother. From a child it was said of him that he was unreliable and tricky. Getting into some trouble in his native State he went to England to escape arrest. Several years later he turned up in Peru, South America, where he married a young Spanish girl whose father was wealthy. In about two years he deserted his wife and child, and hastily left the country taking with him about $20,000 in money which he secured from a bank by forging the signature of his father-in-law on a check. His next escapade, so far as the author has been able to ascertain, was in Montreal, Canada, where he served a year's imprisonment for swindling. Though his full name was Thomas Lawson Hartwell, yet where it served his purpose better to adopt an alias he adopted one. He had been in Melbourne but a few months before the sailing

of the Osceola from that port mentioned in a previous chapter.

After Lawson had compromised the suit at Omaha and had come into possession of $38,500, he said to himself:

"Now I shall cast all worry to the winds and have a rest and a good time for awhile. Tom, you are a smart financier. You have had your ups and downs, but just now you are up. You are in luck old boy, and you deserve to be treated to a good time and you shall be. Let me see! As your clothing is beginning to look a little shabby you must have about the sleekest suit of clothes that Omaha tailors can get up; then you will be ready to take in the theaters, to form the acquaintance of the sporting fraternity of both sexes, and see what is going on in this town in the way of gaming. You have not always." he continued, "been lucky with cards, but sometimes you have been, and as things seem just now to be coming your way, perhaps you can win back some of what you have lost heretofore."

This programme he proceeded to carry into execution, and in a few days he might have been seen promenading the principal streets or at places of popular resort, attired in a suit of the latest style and of finest material. He occupied the most expensive box-seats at the theaters, had established his headquarters at the best hotel, drove a spirited and handsome team of horses and spent money lavishly at the fashionable saloons. It was therefore but a short time before he had a score or more of admirers and chums—men and women of the classes with

whom he mingled. Among these were three professional gamblers—Jerry Welch, Sam Osborn and Bill Jordan. The quartette frequently met and spent a part and sometimes nearly all the hours of the night at cards, poker being their favorite game. The stakes were not large at first, but on two or three occasions the pot represented several hundred dollars. At these sittings quite a quantity of the best brands of champagne were provided and toward the close of the game the players were not only decidedly hilarious but often reckless. Lawson's three companions were professionals with the cards, and they were not long in discovering that he was not a match for them but he had more money than they, and each individually and all collectively, were adroitly maneuvering to transfer as many dollars as possible from his pocket to their own. The gaming went on two and three nights each week, Lawson sometimes winning but oftener losing. Disinterested spectators who had been observing how the playing was progressing, knew that the three professionals had a trap set for Lawson and would spring it at the right time. The fateful night finally came. The four met early and the trio had their plans carefully matured. Bill Jordan declared that as he was not feeling very well it was his intention to go home early—he didn't care to play late, if at all, but felt like "irrigating a bit."

"Come on boys," he said, "and let's have something." All accepted the cordial invitation with alacrity and ranged themselves in front of the bar. After they had drank and chatted a moment, Sam Osborn said, "Have another with

me," and they had it, and then it was Welch's turn to order the fiery liquid followed by Lawson, and later on by Jordan again. One thing escaped the notice of Lawson on this convivial occasion, and that was, that while he, each time, filled his glass to the brim with whisky and drained it to the last drop, his companions drank very little though dexterously going through the motions of swallowing as much liquor as he. When the four took their seats at the table and the cards were brought out, Lawson was not in a fit condition to play an honest game, if there be any honest games, much less was he prepared to hold his own against three sharpers who had conspired together to fleece him and were themselves sober. It had been agreed between Osborn, Welch and Jordan, that Lawson was to be permitted to win most of the stakes till he became emboldened and reckless, and then when enough was at stake, the trap was to be sprung, and Jordan was to win the pile which would afterwards be divided among the three. This program was carried out until after the midnight hour. When the enthusiasm began to abate a round of champagne was indulged in and the ball kept rolling. Lawson won the first $100.00, then he lost $50.00. Again he increased his wealth to $250.00, again he suffered a small loss, and so the game went on, Lawson becoming more and still more excited, risking greater and still greater amounts even on poor cards. The conspirators were now ready to spring their trap. It was Welch's turn to deal the cards. He was a most skillful manipulator of the pasteboards. Before the game began he had provided two packs of

cards exactly alike. One pack he had in his pocket. When it came his time to deal he adroitly substituted the cards he had concealed for the ones that had been in use. They had been "fixed." He dealt Lawson four kings and Jordan four aces. When Lawson looked at his cards he became very much excited and blurted out: "Fellers, I will bet you $10,000 on this hand; here is the money who dares to cover it?"

"Now, see here, Tom Lawson," said Jordan, "you have been bluffing all evening; you have won several times by scaring us. I believe you are bluffing now. I don't propose that you frighten me any longer. I take that bet and go you $10,000 more," as he laid down a pile of what purported to be good money, but which in facts were counterfeits.

"All right!" yelled Lawson, as he drew from his pocket another roll of money, and counted out $10,000 and laid it on the stack of bills in the center of the table, and "now—hic—I bet you $10,000 more," and rising to his feet, he threw another $10,000 down, bringing his hand down on the table with great force as he did so and, "I dare you to cover that."

"I will do it, Mr. Lawson," said Jordan, as he placed on top of the pile a number of counterfeit bank notes, "and now I call you."

At this, Lawson with a triumphant air threw down his four kings and reached for the stack of money.

"Hold on there, Tom Lawson," said Jordan, "Your four kings are not in it against my four aces," and he threw down his cards, reached for the bills and with a swift motion swept them

into a sack he had taken from his pocket, and sprang to his feet. As he did so his two fellow conspirators quickly arose from their seats and the three hurriedly left the room and the house.

Be-fuddled as Lawson's brain was, he knew that according to the rules of the game that he had lost, as two pairs of aces are higher than two pairs of kings, but he was too much under the influence of liquor to know whether he had been beaten fairly or was the victim of a trick. Neither did he then realize how much money he had lost, but drunk as he was, he was conscious of the fact that he had parted from a large sum. He slowly arose from his seat, after his late companions had disappeared, and, walking to the other side of the room, sat down on a chair, clapped his hands to his head and began cursing his luck; then for a time he walked to and fro across the floor trying to think out how he had lost. Finally, muttering to himself that he "was a fool—that he was drunk"—he left the place with a confused brain and unsteady steps and made his way to his hotel and to his bed where during the following ten hours or more he slept off the effects of the drink. After he had sobered up and gone all over in his memory the events of the night previous as near as he could recall them, he took from an inside pocket a purse and counted the money he had left. He had got out of the Higsbee affair $38,500. He had expended a large sum in extravagant living, and the night before had parted with $30,000. He found that but $964 remained. After going over the money two or three times and sitting for some time in a meditative mood he muttered:

"Tom Lawson Hartwell, you are a fool—yes, an infernal fool. You are worse than that, you are a brainless idiot. Why didn't you have sense enough to keep sober last night, or at least sober enough to know what was going on. You have been done up; you have been skinned and you are yourself to be blamed for it. You was cheated; you was victimized, but you was drunk and you might have expected such treatment. Well, it is mighty lucky for you that the game ended where it did otherwise you would not have a dollar left. I congratulate you that you are not dead broke. You won't have to beg nor steal for a little while anyway; $964 is not a large amount, but it is enough to constitute a basis for future operations, but you must leave Omaha at once or you will be wanting to try to win some of that money back. Poker is just a trifle too exciting for you besides these Omaha sports are too smooth for an amateur like you. Yes, I will leave this town and leave soon."

Within twenty-four hours after Lawson decided to quit Omaha, he was on his way to Denver. He had no well matured plans as to what he would do in that city but having a versatility of talents for getting money easily, he decided to stop there for a time and see what might turn up. He thought of many schemes but none seemed to promise great results. At the close of one of his protracted and earnest meditations he ejaculated: "Yes, I secured a snug sum from that Higsbee business but there is a million or two in that estate yet. I see no field for operations more inviting than that. How to get hold of a lot of that money, that is the problem. If

Lilly would marry me the solution would be easy. I have already made good progress toward the consummation of that plan. Her mother is infatuated with me and is using all the influence she can command with her daughter in my favor; moreover, Lilly herself has not positively refused me. In fact she has made a conditional promise to become my wife. Her only demand was that the marriage he postponed a year after which she might consent to marry me. Now how can I bring about that desirable event sooner. That's the problem. Let me see? Her mother has great influence with her and is exerting it favorably for me; that is one important point gained. Now, if in some way I could make Lilly believe that it was also the wish of her father that she should accept my proposal I would consider the riddle pretty nearly solved. But Col. Higsbee is dead, or probably is. I might tell Lilly that her father informed me that he very much desired her to marry me but that would not have the weight of the Colonel's own words. While he did favor my suit for the hand of his daughter, it would seem that he never told her that it was his wish that she should marry me. If I had a letter that he had written or a writing of some sort to exhibit to her containing such a request, that would greatly assist me in the scheme. Ah, why not write such a letter myself, and tell her I had found it among his papers, or, that he had delievered it to me? But that would hardly do for she would most likely inquire why I had not so informed her before. She might be suspicious of its genuineness. Now, how can I write

such a letter and account for the manner of its coming into my possession?

"I have it! I have it! I will put up a story that, say two men who were in the boat that took Col. Higsbee from the Osceola made their escape and they had been entrusted by the Colonel with a letter addressed to his wife and daughter, and that letter shall contain the dying request of Col. Higsbee that Lilly shall become my wife. Good! Tom Lawson Hartwell, that is a capital idea! You may not be an expert at poker, especially when you are drunk, but you are decidedly clever—you are a born diplomat. You ought to have been a lawyer and gone to Congress. I can easily bribe two fellows for a little gold and a few drinks of gin, to play the part of rescued sailors from the boat, who will swear to what I want them to say. Yes, that is a clever scheme and whether it wins or fails it is worth trying."

CHAPTER XIII.

A FORGED INSTRUMENT PURPORTING TO BE COL. HIGSBEE'S LAST WILL.

Putting into execution his idea of forgery Lawson wrote out the following:

"I, James Higsbee, am a victim of the wrecked steamer Osceola. Death seems certain. If this writing is found I request the finder to send it to my wife, Mary Higsbee, Melbourne, Australia, or my daughter Lilly of the same place, in care of the United States Consul of Australia. I

give and bequeath all my property both real and personal to them equally. If they are not living, I bequeath the same to Thomas Lawson, whom I recognize as the accepted lover and prospective husband of my daughter Lilly. It is my dying wish that my daughter Lilly, if living, becomes the wife of Thomas Lawson in whom I repose the fullest confidence. Adieu,

"JAMES HIGSBEE."

"There," said Lawson, to himself, "that's a clever scheme, and one that I will make win. Now for the villains who will swear that Col. Higsbee wrote that and gave it to them."

Very soon after the turning on of the gas lights of the city, Lawson, well disguised, left his hotel and made his way to one of the saloons two or three blocks distant. After ordering a drink he took a seat in the billiard rooms adjoining and ran his eye over the men engaged in the play and scrutinized the countenances of the loungers and lookers-on. Men were passing in and out and none escaped his attention. For nearly two hours he saw no man to whom he thought he would like to submit his proposition. Finally his eye rested on one fellow who occupied a chair in the corner, smoking a cheap cigar. His face looked familiar; he thought to himself, "I have seen that man before but where?" He walked over to the other side and came near to him. Now he had a better opportunity to scan his features.

"Yes," he said to himself, "I am not mistaken, that is Dick Stanton, who served a three years' term of imprisonment in the penitentiary in Mon-

treal for burglary, and who was discharged from prison on the same day I was let out. We sat near each other at the convicts' table. He does not recognize me, but will I think when I talk to him." He walked up to the man's side, touched him on the shoulder and in a low voice, said: "Howdy do, Dick, where did you come from." The man looked up quickly and with a nervous start, and peered into his questioner's face. "Don't you know me," asked Lawson. "Well, hardly," answered the man. "Your face has a familiar look but I cannot quite place you."

"Come, let us have something," said Lawson, "and I will help you to recall the time and place where you knew me," and the two men drew up to the bar. After Lawson had paid for the drinks he said:

"Now, Dick, let us get away from the crowd a bit and have a chat about old times at Montreal." At this, Stanton's face brightened, and slapping Lawson on the shoulder, said: "Ah, now I remember you, Pard. You were Jack White then, but may be that's not yer name now." "No," said Lawson, "but don't speak too loud. My name now is Thomas Lawson, Esq., and I am a capitalist and in love. Come, let's sit down and I will tell you about it."

They found a quiet corner and the conversation was continued for some time. Lawson informed his friend that he had a little scheme in contemplation.

"If it succeeds it will make me a million, and if I get the money I will take good care of the fellows who assist me in securing it, but it cannot be a success unless I can get two men to make

such statements under oath as I may dictate. Then he drew from his pocket the writing purporting to be that executed by James Higsbee and explained that he wanted two men to swear that Col. Higsbee had in person delivered that identical paper to them. "Dick," said Lawson, "I will give you $5.00 to make an affidavit as I have indicated and I will pay $5.00 to any one of your friends for a like service. Will you do it, and if so, can you find the other fellow?"

"You bet your life," said Stanton. "I am nearly dead broke now and am just looking for something to turn up through which I can make a raise. Write out what you want me to sign and I will slap down my name for $5.00 so quick it will make you dizzy, and I'll fetch you the other feller in short meter who'll do the same for that amount of collateral."

"All right," replied Lawson, "You bring your friend and if you help me out in this I'll take good care of you fellows."

It was arranged that the parties should meet at the same place on the following evening at 10:00 p. m., when the business would be completed. After another drink at the bar, the two men separated, and Lawson returned to his hotel to draw up the writing to which he wished the men to make oath. He spent the remainder of the evening in preparing the following:

"*To Whom it May Concern, Greeting*:—We the undersigned, being duly sworn, depose and say, that on the third of March of the present year we shipped as common seamen on the steamship Osceola, at Melbourne, Australia, bound for San Francisco, Cal. When about eighteen days out

we encountered a severe storm; our ship sprang a leak and went down. Four small boats were loaded by passengers and crew. Among others who were in our small boat was an elderly gentleman whose name we learned was Col. James Higsbee, of Melbourne, Australia, and a young man, an engineer by occupation, whom the elderly gentleman addressed as Henry Ashton. Our boat was separated from the other three boats. After contending with a very boisterous sea for about twenty-four hours, most of our companions were exhausted and ill. Col. Higsbee being well advanced in years, was very feeble and despondent. We at one time overheard a conversation between him and Ashton and the elderly man seemed very much offended at the young man. Later when there was somewhat of a lull of the wind and waves, the elderly gentleman asked if any one in the boat had a scrap of paper and pencil. One man had such articles and gave them to Mr. Higsbee, who soon after used them in writing. We, the affiants, being experienced sailors knew that our boat was overloaded and was liable to be capsized in so rough a sea. We being expert swimmers, and having noticed what appeared to be several planks lashed together a short distance from our boat, decided to swim to the raft and try in that way to reach the shore if we should not be discovered and saved by some passing ship. We so announced our intention to our companions. Just before we made the plunge, Mr. Higsbee asked if one of us would take a piece of writing which he had put in a leather purse, and if we ever reached shore to try and find his wife and daughter and

deliver it to them. We freely gave our assent and Richard Stanton, one of the affiants hereto, procured a cord and suspended the sack to his neck. We then sprang into the water and swam to the raft which we found to be larger than we had supposed, and we were pleased with our changed condition. The sea was still very rough. We had not been on the raft to exceed half an hour and while we were still close to the small boat, when a great wave dashed over us which would have swept us into the ocean had we not been experienced sailors. The same wave struck the small boat, turned it bottom side up, and all our late companions were drowned. We drifted about for several hours, then were rescued by a lumber vessel and some hours later were safely landed in San Francisco. We made considerable inquiry as to the wife and daughter of James Higsbee, but could learn nothing of their whereabouts, and came to the conclusion they too were lost. We later, went to Denver, Colorado, seeking employment, where we accidentally met Mr. Thomas Lawson, who informed us that Mrs. and Miss Higsbee had been rescued, that they were then in San Francisco, and that he was about to start to that city where he would call on them soon after his arrival. As we repose the fullest confidence in Mr. Lawson, and knowing that he is a trusted friend of the family, we have therefore delivered to him the writing that we received from Col. James Higsbee."

"There," said Lawson, to himself, as he finished writing the above. "I think that is just about the right thing. With that sworn to, I will go to San Francisco, show it to the Higs-

bees, and if I am not a bigger chump than I think I am, it will bring matters to just about the proper focus. This business is a trifle risky on my part and might put me behind the bars for a term of years if exposed, but I have taken great risks before, and I can afford to take this one, for if my scheme is successful, I will not only secure a big fortune but win a handsome wife."

At the appointed time the following night Lawson went to the place agreed upon for the meeting with Dick Stanton, whom he found waiting for him, and who was accompanied by a man whose countenance and general manner indicated that he would not scruple to sign the death warrant of his best friend for a $5.00 gold coin. The three men withdrew from the crowd and retired to an unfrequented corner of the room, and at Lawson's suggestion sat down at a small table. After a few minutes of conversation in a low tone, Lawson, drew the writing from his pocket, adjusted his fountain pen, and jingled two five dollar gold pieces in his hand.

"There, boys," he said, in a subdued voice, "when you sign your names to that paper, here is $5.00 each for you besides another good drink of whisky. Do you want to read what I have written before you sign?" Stanton took the paper, rapidly ran his eyes over the contents, reached for the pen and without speaking a word appended his name to the writing and passed the paper to his friend, remarking as he did so: "It's all a damned lie, but it's all right. Here, Jack, if you can write, whack your name right down there under mine." Jack obeyed the instruction

when both men received their coin and Lawson carefully put the paper in his pocket.

"Now, boys, let's irrigate, and remember, 'mum' is the word," said Lawson. The three men arose from their seats and repaired to the bar where Lawson paid for the drinks, shook hands with the men, and left the place, going directly to his room. An hour later, Lawson being alone, looked over the affidavit, when he exclaimed:

"Why I forgot one thing. All affidavits should be executed in the presence of an officer who should certify that the affiants signed the same in his presence. Now, I am not acquainted with a single officer in this city and don't want to be. Even if I were it would not have been a very discreet act on my part to take those two jail birds before him. Something might have been noticed by him to excite his suspicion. Oh, well, I can fix a little matter like that. I will just write a fictitious certificate and officer's name myself." He thereupon, in a disguised hand, wrote the words:

"Subscribed and sworn to before me, the undersigned, this 7th day of October, 1895.

"CHRISTOPHER JONES.

"Justice of the Peace in and for the City of Denver, Colorado."

After a somewhat protracted meditation over the status of affairs as they now existed, Lawson arose from his seat, and for several minutes paced to and fro in his room. Stopping suddenly he said to himself:

"Well, Tom, there is nothing to keep you longer in Denver. Your field for exploitation is now

in San Francisco. You are now fully equipped for your campaign. I cannot see but that you are ready to proceed immediately to the Pacific coast and open siege for a fortune and a wife." Having arrived at this conclusion, twenty-four hours had not elapsed before he was on his way to the city of the Golden Gate.

CHAPTER XIV.

HENRY ASHTON'S LONG SEARCH FOR MISS HIGSBEE.

The reader will remember that we left Henry Ashton and George Batty in Hong Kong, China. At the time of which we write steamers did not pass to and fro between China and the ports of the United States so frequently nor so direct as now. Three weeks had passed before there came an opportunity for our heroes to embark for America. But at last the announcement was made that the Santa Paula would leave the following Saturday. She would not, however, go direct but via Manilla, and her destination was Port Los Angeles, Cal. She was a small and a slow boat, but new and staunch, and Ashton and Batty were not long in deciding that they would go with her in preference to waiting longer. They therefore engaged passage and awaited impatiently for the hour to come when they would start. The appointed time for sailing, however, came in due time, and there were no passengers on that boat who were more rejoiced than they that they had begun their journey across the Pa-

cific. The two men were almost constantly together, and, as might be expected, the theme discussed by them more than all others, was the sailing of the Osceola, the storm, the shipwreck, the leaving the ship, the separation of the small boats, the narrow escape of Col. Higsbee from drowning, his death, but more important than all, the probable fate of Lilly Higsbee and her mother. Every day, and almost every hour of the day, they discoursed about that, discussing the matter in all its bearings. Mr. Ashton in fact could not, except at short intervals, talk about anything else. At times he was hopeful that she was alive and well, that he would see her again, and he pictured the joyful reunion, and that he would lead her to the altar and then their future lives would be supremely happy. As to her large wealth he said nothing; he cared nothing on his own account, for he declared he was young, and strong, and brave, and industrious, without vices, without extravagant habits or desires, and he had confidence in his ability to become so efficient in his chosen calling that he would deserve promotion and would at the proper time be promoted. Mr. Batty deeply sympathized with his friend, for whom he had formed a very warm attachment, and whose sterling integrity and nobleness of character he greatly admired, and while he had grave fears that Ashton might never see his fiancee again, yet he studiously refrained from so intimating, but on the contrary made use of all the ability he could command to sustain the thought that all of his friend's hopes and expectations would be fully realized.

There was one other subject that the two men

would occasionally discuss, and that was Socialism. In the mind of Ashton this subject was next in importance to that of the fate of his beloved. Mr. Batty did not have any consuming desire to debate economics and the industrial problems, although his interest in these topics was growing, but he observed that when his friend was deeply dejected from long and earnest thinking over the probable fate of Miss Higsbee, that he was sometimes able to divert his mind for a time, from his sorrow and his painful anxiety, by requesting Ashton to explain some Socialistic principle or by advancing some argument against his companion's economic theory. One beautiful afternoon the two travelers were occupying comfortable seats upon deck. Mr. Batty had eloquently spoken of the inspiring grandeur of the boundless ocean, the beautiful blue sky, the blazing, glorious sun, bringing life, and health, and joy to earth's myriads of living creatures; of the marvelous achievements of man, who had built great ships that could plow the trackless and mighty deep, conveying men and women from continent to continent, but to all this and more of a similar import, Ashton answered in monosyllables or vouchsafed no reply at all.

CHAPTER XV.

POLITICAL DEBATE BETWEEN LAWYER BATTY, REPUBLICAN, AND HENRY ASHTON, SOCIALIST.

Mr. Batty knew the cause of his friend's sadness, and, after a short silence, and with a humorous twinkle in his eye, said:

"Friend Ashton, I have on former occasions listened with much interest to your talks on Socialism. At those times you made your arguments a trifle lengthy but very interesting. There are a few points that are not yet clear to me in your theory. I should like to catechize you somewhat, and have you, if you can, dissipate some of the fogs that seem to me to enshroud Socialism in spots. Will you answer a few questions? These interrogatories are such as many people are putting to the Socialists."

"With the greatest pleasure, my dear Batty," said Ashton, arousing from his train of melancholy thoughts. "Socialists invite discussion; they welcome the most searching and exhaustive investigation of the economic system they are advocating."

"Well, then," replied Batty, "my first question it, What do the Socialists wish to do—that is, what changes would they make if they had full control of the governmental machinery?"

"First," replied Ashton, "let me quote from that inspired woman, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, before I answer your question."

"WHO ARE SOCIALISTS?

"Who is a Socialist? It is the man
Who strives to formulate or aid a plan
To better earth's condition. It is he
Who, having ears to hear and eyes to see,
Is neither deaf nor blind when might rough shod
Treads down the privileges and rights which God
Means for all men: the privilege to toil,
To breathe pure air, to till the fertile soil;
The right to live, to love, to woo, to wed,
And earn for hungry mouths their need of bread.
The Socialist is he who claims no more
Than his own share from generous nature's store,
But that he asks, too, that no other
Shall claim the share of any weaker brother
And brand him beggar in his own domain,
To glut a mad, inordinate lust for gain.
The Socialist is one who holds the best
Of all God's gifts to toil; the second, rest.
He asks that all men learn the sweets of labor,
And that no idler fatten on his neighbor,
That all men be allowed their share of leisure,
Nor thousands slave that one may seek his pleasure,
Who on the Golden Rule shall dare insist
Behold in him, the Socialist.

"If the Socialists were in power," said Ashton, "they would gradually and as rapidly as could be done without too great a shock to the public, change the present competitive system of business into the co-operative. Now the masses create all the wealth and the few appropriate it to their own benefit. Under Socialism every one would be rewarded according to his deeds."

"I admit," said Batty, "that the Socialist theory is very beautiful, but how can it be put into practice? What particular steps would you take to

usher in your proposed Collective Commonwealth? It seems to be a good and desirable thing—the right thing—but is it practicable?"

"Yes," said Ashton, "it is practicable because it is right. The right is always practicable, the wrong always impracticable. If the Socialists were in power they would first adopt Direct Legislation, making the people the governing force instead of having Kings, and Parliaments, and officers the masters, and the people the servants as now. Next, we would Socialize the land, the transportation lines, the telegraphs, water supplies, gas, and electric light plants, coal, and other mines, oil and all other utilities that have become public necessities. By Socializing these things, I mean that they should be owned by the city, county, State or Nation, and the things which they produce would be furnished to the people at cost of production or operation. Next, perhaps, we would repeal all laws by which lands are transferred by will or inheritance to heirs or others, and, at the death of the present private owners, provide that they should revert to the Commonwealth. The State (the Collective Commonwealth) should not sell those lands, but such property should become the possessions of all collectively, to be occupied and used, as the whole people may, by laws enacted, decide. City, county and State farms, and manufactories, repair shops, canneries and other industrial concerns would be provided where the unemployed might labor during the transition from partial to full Socialism.

"Government pensions to all men and women over sixty years of age, and national insurance of working people against accidents, incapacity to

work, and want in old age. Equal civil and political rights to men and women alike.

"A system of compulsory education—the State to not only provide free school houses and free tuition, but free school books, and, when necessary, free clothing, board and lodging, to children of school age. Now hundreds of thousands of children grow up without education because of the inability of parents to provide them with books, clothing and food. The present system, which deprives vast numbers of children of proper training, is a prolific cause of ignorance and crime.

"We would adopt the initiative and referendum and the imperative mandate."

Here Mr. Batty interrupted by asking: "Will you please to explain those words, Mr. Ashton?"

"The initiative and referendum," said Ashton, "is a method working most admirably in Switzerland. When the people desire any certain law enacted, they circulate a petition to which they secure the names of five per cent of the voters, asking the Legislature to submit such proposed law to the people, to be approved or rejected at an election. They thus make all the laws or approve all the laws themselves by which they are governed. The Legislature may also, on its own motion, enact laws, but they too must be submitted to the people for their decision at the polls. This insures, in fact as well as in theory, a government for the people, of the people, and by the people.

"The Imperative Mandate is the exercise of the legal authority to compel any officer to surrender his office before his time expires, if he has proven false to the trust committed to his care, and an-

other public servant is sent to take his place. When that law is in force in any country, the members of the law making bodies, President, Governors, Mayors, or any other public servant, knowing that their term will last only so long as they prove true to the people, will be very careful how they discharge their official duties.

"Now, Mr. Batty, I have stated about all the first steps which Socialists propose to take when they come into power."

"But," said Batty, "you surely have not stated the full program of Socialism."

"No," replied the engineer, "but the adoption of so much as I have outlined would bring untold blessings to the people. After they had enjoyed these great privileges for awhile, and had seen the trusts and monopolies rendered not only harmless but turned into great benefits to all the people; after they had seen the tramp disappear because he is employed in the government shops or on the public farms; after they had seen the sweat shops abolished; after they had seen distressing poverty and evidence of despair removed; after they had seen tender boys and girls taken from the factories, and the mines, and the slums, and put into the schools; after they beheld happy old men and women—happy because they were insured against want in their last days—then they would be prepared to take the remaining steps to establish forever the co-operative commonwealth in all its fullness."

"And what further steps would the Socialists desire to take after they had given the world all these good things you have enumerated," asked Batty.

"Socialism will be here in its fullness," said Ashton, "when every man and woman will be rewarded according to his deeds; when every worker with brain or hands receives the full product of his toil; when no man will pay his individual fellowman interest, rental or profit; when the wage-system by which one man owns the time and labor of his fellowman will have been abolished—when the competitive system of business will be displaced by the co-operative. Under Socialism labor will be performed because all the good things of life are the result of labor, but each worker with head or hands will labor for the collective commonwealth, and the commonwealth will see to it that each industrious citizen shall have the full benefit of what he earns. Under the competitive system greed, cunning, deception, chicanery, dishonesty, heartlessness, lack of sympathy for others, exploitation of others, are necessary to secure success to the few. It is a system of chaos, in which the most crafty and greedy have the largest success. Under the co-operative system there will be order, method, fair play, square dealing, honor, and justice to all. All the virtues will be fostered; all incentives to deceive, to despair, to tramp down our fellowman, will be eliminated."

"Would not your proposed commonwealth be Communistic?" asked Batty.

"No," replied Ashton, "under a Communistic system every man would have an equal share of the common property regardless of the wealth that he created. Under Socialism every man draws out of the common treasury according to his deeds or service."

"Then," said Batty, "would you not have an inequality of wealth. Would not some possess more property than others?"

"Certainly," replied Ashton. "The Socialist does not advocate a system of 'dividing up' property under which the shiftless and indolent would be possessed of as much as the sober and industrious. The Socialists advocate, not equality of wealth, but equality of opportunity to earn wealth. They say, let private monopolies be abolished, and all the means of production and distribution be owned collectively, and the opportunity to earn be guaranteed equally to all. They say, let us have no monopoly; no special privilege of one person over another in life's struggle; no hereditary monarchy or monied arristocracy; no laws of wills or inheritance through which productive property can be transmitted to those who have not earned any part of it; no class laws; no exclusive franchises granted to private corporations; no legal enactments through which the crafty man may manipulate money and compel his neighbor to borrow from him that the lender may reap the benefit of the borrower's toil; no monopolizing of machinery and the power of steam and electricity by private parties that the monopolist may extort from his fellowman. No; none of these!

"The Socialist would change the present system, and by just legislation and with a high regard for the rights of men and women would guarantee to every one who adds to the wealth or knowledge or happiness of the world the full benefit of his labor by the hands or the head. The clergyman, the physician, the inventor, the mu-

sician, the teacher, the artist, the author, the public officer or superintendent of every department of the Commonwealth—every person engaged in a useful pursuit, to be considered a worker, as well as he who toils with his hands, each receiving his just reward according to his service."

"But what would you do with the man or woman who is indolent and who though able bodied will contribute nothing to the collective wealth even in the way of mental or manual labor?" asked Batty

"The able adult person who will do nothing shall not eat what others earn," said Ashton. "There may be a few such, but under Socialism there will be legal penalties for them. Now there exists a good excuse for the tramp. In the collective commonwealth there will be no excuse, for then the State will furnish every person an opportunity to be employed."

"But," asked Batty, "if every man is to have the full product of his labor will not the industry and economy of some soon enable such to secure much more wealth than the lazy and shiftless, and will not the old conditions of great wealth and abject poverty exist in a few years as now?"

"No," answered Ashton, "for now the great fortunes are accumulated by men who could not themselves have earned their millions in a thousand years. They secured this vast wealth through interest, rent or profit. One stockholder in the great American oil company receives, it is said, $20,000,000 a year. That is made up of profits taken from millions of consumers of oil. These great private fortunes can only be secured

through stock-watering, inheritance laws, monopolistic practices, extortion and other legal but robber methods. Abolish rent, interest and profit, prevent capitalists from buying up all improved machinery, prohibit trusts for private gain, repeal all inheritance laws, destroy monopoly and reward honest industry according to its merits, and you will have a system of economy under which it will be impossible for greedy, crafty men to build up great private fortunes by despoiling their fellowmen."

"Will there be no private property under Socialism?" asked Batty.

"Certainly," replied Ashton. "Socialism does not propose to restrict the accumulation of non-productive private property, but to enable the masses to secure more than they can get under the present system. Its proposition is that productive property, such as land, machinery, water power, steam power, electricity, gas, and those things essential to the subsistence of the human family on this planet, should not be monopolized by a few for their selfish personal benefit, but the whole people should own them collectively. That sort of property not of a public utility, which cannot be put to such public use that it will produce other things, and which shows by its nature that it is non-productive and of a private nature, will under Socialism, be owned privately. Now the machinery used in manufacturing clothing is of a productive nature. The iron of which the machine is made, the coal used in making the machine and in manufacturing the steam that operates it, is of a productive nature. Each of these are 'public utilities,' and should be owned col-

lectively. But the finished product of the machine is non-productive and is property to be owned privately. Brother Batty, the machine that made the clothes you have on, would, under Socialism, be owned collectively but you will own the clothing privately. The industrious man will, under Socialism, own more property than the indolent, but it will be non-productive. He will have a finer residence, a more extensive library, a finer automobile, a more spirited team, grander musical instruments, a larger collection of paintings, will take longer journeys on the railway and steamship lines, and live better than the indolent man who though offered equal opportunities with his industrious neighbor prefers to work less and have less. Remember, Batty, our motto is: 'Every one shall be rewarded according to his deeds.' Under Socialism the industrious worker will own more private property than now and the cunning, non-working idler will have less."

"Will there be money under Socialism," asked Batty."

"Yes," replied Ashton, "in some form, but our present financial and monetary system will not fit the new conditions and will give place to a better system. The money of the Collective Commonwealth will not contain an intrinsic or commodity value, hence could not be 'cornered' for speculation by the gamblers of Wall street. It will be in the nature of a Labor certificate or time check. Each citizen who renders any useful service to the Commonwealth will receive from the superintendent of the department in which he works, a check showing the credit he is entitled

to for hourly, daily or weekly service performed. With these certificates the holder can purchase at the emporium or depository in his department, any article he may desire."

"When Socialism has been adopted in all its fullness," asked Batty, "will not the incentive to excel be destroyed in all the people?"

"I believe," answered Ashton, "I answered that in a former conversation, but I may say that Socialism may curb the incentive in that brand of men who want something for nothing—men who have no higher incentive, in life, than to exploit their fellows out of the fruits of their honest toil, while they look, unmoved by pity, upon the victims of their greed suffering in poverty and squalor; but a nobler incentive than greed will be stimulated. The incentive of the great and good of all the past was not born from the desire to accumulate riches. Jesus, Buddha, Galilleo, Lafayette, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and others whose names will be honored forever, were prompted to great service for humanity by a higher sentiment than that springing from greed. Patriotism, love of approval for service rendered or desire to excel in music or art or philosophy or discovery are often more powerful incentives to great achievements, than the sordid desire for riches. Everything, friend Batty, in Socialism, will conspire to make artists, and poets, and inventors, and true statesmen, and philanthropists, to broaden the mind, enrich the soul and to eliminate from society, greed, ignorance, poverty, and crime."

"It is asserted by some," said Batty, "that So-

cialism is irreligious. Is there any foundation to that objection?"

"No," said Ashton, "while it interferes with no one's religious faith and proposes to deal with economics only, a careful examination of its principles reveals the fact that they are in strict accord to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Socialism is but another name for co-operation. It stands for justice. Its influence is against war. One of its mottoes is, 'Peace on earth, good will to men.' All round the world Socialists are championing the cause of the poor and the oppressed. In America, in England, in France, and Germany, and Belgium, and Russia—in every civilized nation on earth, the Socialists, in every language spoken, are crying, 'justice, *justice*, JUSTICE'—an injury to one, though he be the most degraded and despised, is the concern of all."

"Opposed to this system of co-operation, and justice, and fair play to all, stands the cruel capitalistic, competitive system of the right of private individuals to own public utilities and to so manage them that a few who produce no wealth, shall amass colossal fortunes by crafty methods, while the working classes who produce all wealth, are compelled to live on the very verge of starvation. The motto of this system is, 'Every one for himself. Get what you can and keep what you get' That system of economy upholds monarchy, bloody wars for conquest, and sneers at the Golden Rule. It monopolizes land and water, and electricity, and machinery, and inventions, and transportation, and light, and fuel, and bread stuffs, corners the markets of the world, floods the country with watered and fraudulent

stocks, mercilessly crushes out all rivals, manipulates Congresses, and rulers, and courts, subsidises the press, muzzles the pulpit, and riots in luxury. It forces hundreds of thousands of tender children to work in factories and mines who ought to be in school, crowds down the wages of working men, advances the price of food and clothing of the poor, and shoots men down like dogs who strike for shorter hours of toil or a trifling advance in wages. It talks eloquently about the sacredness of private property, and calls out soldiers to protect it, but has little concern for men, women and children, whom it enjoins by its courts from exercising the right of free speech or of walking on ground that God made for all but which it claims to own. This system has drenched the world with blood, crowded the prisons, alms houses, and insane asylums with its victims, forced thousands of despondent ones to suicide, driven millions of girls into a life of shame and degradation for bread, stunted and murdered vast multitudes of children whom it has forced into lives of toil, created in all great cities slums that are festering with corruption, ignorance and crime, and curses the race by its selfishness, malevolence and greed. I leave it to you to decide, Brother Batty, which of the two systems is more in accord with the requirements of true religion."

"My dear Ashton," said Batty, "your arguments are reasonable; I cannot answer them; I had given Socialism but little study. I had not heretofore understood it. I had imbibed much prejudice against the system from the misrepresentations of those whose interests it is to cre-

ate a false impression regarding it. I now perceive that Socialism is sound both economically and religiously. It appeals to my sense of justice; I can no longer oppose it. On the contrary I shall henceforth do what I can to spread a knowledge of its grand principles among the people. Here is my hand, Ashton, with my pledge that in the future I shall be talking and voting to bring about the Collective Commonwealth." The two men shook hands most heartily, and Ashton remarked:

"It gives me great pleasure, I assure you, to know that you are now to be numbered with the great multitude of clear-thinking, open-minded people, in every civilized country on earth, who are working for the triumph of Socialism. Every good, well-meaning man and woman are Socialists to some extent at least, no matter whether they call themselves Republicans, or Democrats, or Populists, or Labor Unionists, or by any other name. No one can be in favor of the common schools, public libraries, asylums for the insane, the deaf and dumb, orphans' homes, the postal system, soldiers' home, or any other co-operative institution, without being partially a Socialist, for all these things are Socialistic. The more advanced Socialist says let us not stop with the good Socialist institutions already mentioned, but extend the public ownership idea far enough to include the collective ownership of other utilities which show by their nature that they should be owned collectively instead of privately. Let us advance. Evolution, progress is the law of nature.

CHAPTER XVI.

LAWSON URGES SPEEDY MARRIAGE TO MISS HIGSBEE. SHE CONSENTS, SUPPOSING ASHTON WAS DROWNED.

Let us now leave Ashton and Batty, who have a long journey before them, and enquire regarding the whereabouts of Tom Lawson, whom we left in a former chapter en route to San Francisco. He had from time to time written to Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly but carefully refrained from informing them of the compromise of the suit at Omaha and of the loss by gambling of the greater part of the money he had received through his perfidy. As he journeyed westward he considered the merits of several falsehoods, one of which he would tell as to the status of the suit. He finally decided to represent that the case had been continued to a subsequent term of court, and that he, himself, had by reason of his superior business sagacity, effected the postponement, to the great chagrin of the railway officials, who were prepared to go to trial. His influence, he would say, was so great with the judge, that he carried his point and achieved a signal preliminary victory over an array of distinguished and brilliant attorneys. He reached San Francisco on schedule time, and, after selecting a hotel and carefully attending to every detail of dress and appearance, he prepared to call on Lilly and her mother. This he did on the evening following his arrival, finding the ladies both at home.

Mrs. Higsbee greeted him with decided cordi-

ality, remarking that she was most delighted at seeing him again. Lilly was less demonstrative; she was, in fact, dignified and reserved in manner. She extended her hand to Lawson and quietly asked: "When did you return, Mr. Lawson?" Lawson affected much gladness at meeting the ladies. He smiled and smiled again; he shook their hands most vigorously, explaining as he did so: "I am most happy at seeing you once more. How have you both been? Do you know, my dear Mrs. Higsbee, that I thought of you and Lilly every day and every hour of the day since I last saw you, notwithstanding my business was so pressing that I rarely had time in which to write you. Yet, I had you almost constantly in mind. Often I felt impelled to drop everything and fly to San Francisco. Until I was separated from you, I did not fully realize how essential to my happiness is my nearness to you. Oh, my dear Lilly, I must, I must confess that I can never be happy away from you. I shall never leave you again unless I do so at your request. You need an adviser, a friend, aye some one much closer than a friend. Mrs. Higsbee, may I not be to you a son? Miss Lilly, may I not be your faithful, devoted, loving husband? Say yes, and I will be the happiest of men. My name, my fortune, my life—all shall be yours."

The young lady started as though moved by a sudden shock; her face grew pale; her lips quivered, her eyes were turned to the floor and she clutched almost convulsively the arms of the chair in which she was sitting. Lawson stepped to her side, raised her hand to his lips and imprinted a kiss upon it. She did not resist but allowed her

hand to rest in his, nor did she speak for several seconds. At last, and apparently with considerable effort, with her eyes upon the floor, in scarcely an audible voice, she said:

"Mr. Lawson, when you made your first proposal I did not refuse you but frankly informed you that I did not love you but that my love was for another. I made a conditional promise to marry you but asked for one year's time in which to consider it and that if Henry Ashton had not then appeared I would abandon all hope that he is alive and I would then become your wife. I most reluctantly admit that up to this time I have received no evidence to prove that he still lives, but I have no positive proof that he does not. The year has not expired. It is still my wish that our marriage be delayed until the end of a year from the date of your first proposal, or until I have proof positive that he is dead."

"My dear Lilly," answered Lawson, "I am fully convinced that you loved Henry Ashton. Were he alive I would not be your suitor. Though I would be miserable all my life, be that long or short, without you, yet if he were among the living I would fly to the uttermost parts of the earth and there, consumed by poignant grief and unrequited love, await my summons to quit this earth, which without you, my first and only love, would be but a desert waste. But Henry Ashton is no more; he is gone forever. It is as you have said, that you have no positive proof of this fact. I have, and can furnish you that evidence which, for your sake, I have hesitated to present as I shrink from inflicting upon you the pain that such proof will cause you. I assure you,

dear Lilly, that Henry Ashton is dead, but I am alive and here pleading to become your comforter, your protector, your devoted, faithful, loving husband—aye your very slave."

"But what proof have you, Mr. Lawson, more than that furnished by the writing on the piece of wood attached to the boat found near Santa Cruz?" asked Lilly.

"I have the testimony under oath of two eyewitnesses, Dick Stanton and Jack Welch," said Lawson. "These two men left the boat occupied by your revered father and Henry Ashton, and took refuge on a raft and were thus enabled to be rescued. They have given the details of the terrible calamity that overtook your loved ones. They also received a letter from your father which they delivered to me for you. Here, Mrs. Higsbee, is the letter, which I did not entrust to the uncertainty of the mails, but which I have brought to you personally, and here is also the statement made under oath of the two sailors. I will now leave you for a time but will call again soon. I feel that you will need sympathy and advice. I shall deem it a great privilege and pleasure to assist you in any way you may suggest." So saying Lawson handed the letter to Mrs. Higsbee and the affidavit to Lilly, and quietly withdrew from their presence and soon after left the house.

The ladies eagerly and tearfully perused the writings and although the information which they conveyed did not come to them as a sudden shock as they had for weeks been anticipating such sad information, yet after reading them they again mingled their tears and sobs together. At times

they had no other thought than that Col. Higsbee and Henry Ashton were lost to them forever, while at other times they clung to a faint hope that they might have been rescued by some passing ship and that they would meet again. Now all hope was gone; the last shadow of doubt that they were dead was removed and they for a time gave themselves up to the deepest grief.

The next day was one of those delightful days for which California is justly famous. The sun shown brightly; the air was pure and invigorating and was ladened with the sweet perfume of flowers which grow so luxuriously on the Pacific coast. Mrs. Higsbee had slept but little during the preceding night. She was sad and indisposed. After partaking of the morning meal, Lilly suggested a visit to Golden Gate park.

"Mother," she said, "let us go out and try to divert our thoughts from our great sorrow and let us hope to regain some of our wonted physical and mental strength."

Lilly's suggestion was seconded by her mother and a few hours later the two might have been seen strolling about the park, listening to the music of the birds, admiring the flowers on all sides of them, breathing in the fresh pure air and wearing a more cheerful expression of countenance.

After they had become somewhat wearied by walking and sight-seeing, and had seated themselves at the edge of one of the beautiful banks of flowers and shrubbery, and neither had broken the silence for several minutes, Mrs. Higsbee said:

"My dear daugher, I have been waiting for

you to allude to the proposal of Mr. Lawson. Have you yet in your own mind fixed upon the day on which the union shall take place? I hope it may be soon. I do not forget the request that you made that the marriage should be deferred one year from the date of Mr. Lawson's first proposal that you might be certain that Mr. Ashton is no more of earth, but now that we have the proof of his death, all reasons that might have existed for delay no longer exist, and I hope that you may see that it is for the best interests of all concerned that the union is consummated in the near future, and that is my desire. Mr. Lawson has patiently awaited your decision. It was your dear father's dying request that you become his wife as it is also my most ardent wish. He impresses me most favorably. He has not only declared his undying love for you, but has manifested the very highest respect and esteem for me. Not from direct words spoken but from delicate intimations dropped by him I am sure he hopes to lead you to the altar in the very near future. Are you not prepared to fix the date of the happy day?"

"Dear mother," answered the girl, "my last hope of ever again meeting my beloved in this life has been extinguished, but my love was given to him and I have it not in my power to transfer it to another. Both reason and intuition tell me that no woman should marry the man she does not love, no matter how noble, and manly, and talented, or distinguished, or wealthy he may be. Were I to consult my feelings alone and consider not the wishes and happiness of others, I should decline to become the wife of Thomas

Lawson or any other man who might offer marriage, but Henry Ashton, whom I had loved with all the devotion that a true woman is capable of, is gone from earth and as it was the dying request of my revered father, and is the earnest wish of my dear, good mother that I accept the proposal of Mr. Lawson, I have done so, not because I love him but from a sense of duty, and I will become his wife to-morrow, or next week, or next year, or any day he may desire the ceremony to take place, and I most humbly ask God to pardon me for an act that my conscionce does not approve."

"My dear daughter," said Mrs. Higsbee, "I am rejoiced at your decision. Though you do not now entertain any tender affection for Mr. Lawson, I am sure you will after you become his wife and know him better. He will be so loving and devoted to you that in time you will appreciate his superior worth; then you know my dear child that he is of distinguished parentage, is refined and accomplished and is wealthy. He can and will provide you with a grand home and surround you with every luxury. You will have diamonds and elegant apparel, and servants and social distinction. You have a fortune of your own and when that is united with the still greater wealth of your husband, you will be equipped to associate with queens and princesses. I shall make my home with you and I already anticipate the social triumphs in store for us both. As for your love for Henry Ashton, that was only an infatuation incident to first love. I might say the fondness and romantic sentiment of the unsophisticated school girl. I do not doubt that he was a clever mechanic and a well meaning young man but he

was poor and had to work and you know that working men and trades people are stupid and lack the refinement of the rich. Besides that, he had imbibed those awful anarchistic heresies advocated by the Socialists who insist on dividing up equally all the property of the country and who have the impudence to contend that the vulgar mechanics and other working people are as good as the wealthy classes. No, my dear Lilly, Ashton was not your equal. I would have felt that the Higsbee family would have been irretrievably disgraced had you ever become the wife of Henry Ashton."

"Mother! Mother!" exclaimed Lilly, arising from her seat, "please desist. I entreat you to say no more. I can not listen to such talk about Henry Ashton even from you. I do not agree with you when you express the opinion you do regarding him nor with your opinions regarding Socialism. You do not appreciate the nobleness of character possessed by Henry Ashton, nor do you understand the views entertained by him on economics. Often listening to his portrayal of the ills which afflict the masses and to his proposed cure for those ills I came to think as he did. I cannot admit that industrious working people are not just as worthy and just as intelligent as the wealthy. Henry Ashton said that honesty, sobriety, industry, courage to do the right—in short, character is what constitutes the real lady or gentleman rather than the possession of money or property, and I am fully persuaded that he was right. Though it is my desire, as it is my duty, to listen most respectfully to what my mother might say to me, I must ask you to re-

frain in the future from expressing to me any thing derogatory or disrespectful to the memory of Henry Ashton. Let us now change the subject. I have consented to marry Mr. Lawson on any day he may designate and it shall be my constant purpose to be to him a true and dutiful wife." So saying Lilly withdrew from her mother's presence and slowly walking down the shaded path gave vent to her emotion in a flood of tears.

Lawson now called every day on Lilly and her mother. He left nothing undone that was in his power to do to make a favorable impression on Miss Higsbee, and to win her favor, for well he knew that she had no tender feeling for him. He was not quite sure that she did not even despise him. Lilly occasionally went on short drives with him and attended a few places of amusement, but this she consented to do only at rare intervals and when she had no reason to assign why she did not wish to go. Her manner at all times toward him was one of dignified reserve bordering almost on decided coolness. But while he was fully conscious of the fact that she entertained no love for him, this caused him but little anxiety. She had promised to be his wife and he could rely on Mrs. Higsbee on insisting that Lilly should redeem her pledge. The date of the wedding was fixed for the near future, and nothing appeared above the horizon that portended any miscarriage of his plans that would secure to him a fortune and a wife. He cared nothing for her love, but his desire for her riches was unquenchable. With the property securely in his possession or under his control, she might go to the ends of the earth or to the bottom of the sea,

and he would pass no sleepless nights nor wear any mourning on that account. But he was anxious to have the ceremony performed at the very earliest date possible. There were several good reasons for this. One was that Henry Ashton or Col. Higsbee might turn up, and if they did, his adroitly concocted plans would be defeated. Another reason was that he had from two or three sources learned that a brother of his wife from South America was in the United States and had for several months been searching for him. Just what his brother-in-law wanted to find him for, he was not certain, but he well knew that he had several good reasons for wishing to see him, and he had a lively suspicion that if Don Castano and he had a meeting, there would be, either a tragedy, or he would be invited to return to the scene of his exploits in Peru, and the invitation to go would be backed up by a warrant for his arrest and a requisition by the legal authorities. He therefore wished the marriage to take place as soon as possible that he might leave for Australia and elude his pursuers. To this suggestion Mrs. Higsbee eagerly assented while Lilly interposed no objections so it was settled that the marriage ceremony should take place in three weeks from that date.

CHAPTER XVII.

ASHTON AND BATTY ARRIVE AT LOS ANGELES FROM CHINA. THEY CONTINUE THEIR SEARCH FOR MISS HIGSBEE AND MEET DON CASTANO, OF SOUTH AMERICA, WHO RENDERS THEM VALUABLE ASSISTANCE.

In a former chapter we left Henry Ashton and George Batty on board the Santa Paula enroute to Los Angeles, California. They had an uneventful voyage. The ship was small and slow, and on account of adverse winds and long stops at Manilla and Honolulu, the voyage was prolonged several weeks beyond the time advertised for their arrival at the American port. During the long and monotonous trip Ashton and Batty talked daily of the wrecking of the Osceola, the probable fate of Mrs. Higsbee and Lilly, and of the plans they might adopt for instituting the search for them. They finally settled it in their minds that on landing they would make it their first business to ascertain if they had been rescued from the small boat.

"That is the most important thing of all," said Ashton, "for if they were saved from a watery grave then the probability is that they are somewhere alive, and well, and we may soon ascertain their whereabouts."

"America is a large country," said Batty, "and it may not be so easy as you anticipate to find two women among eighty millions of people; then

there is a possibility that they may have returned to Australia or gone to Europe."

"Yes," said Ashton, "that may all be true, but I shall never, never cease searching for them until I find them. I shall ransack the earth for them. All the remaining years of my life shall, if necessary, be spent in the search."

"And I will be your companion and helper in that search," replied Batty. "Aside from all consideration of friendship for you, it is my professional duty to put forth every possible effort to find them for I am not only Col. Higsbee's attorney for adjusting his unsettled business in the United States, but I am the custodian of his last will and testament, and I am under legal obligations to deliver that instrument to his widow and daughter if they are living."

One bright morning several weeks after the Santa Paula steamed out of the bay from Hong Kong, and after a monotonous journey, it was announced that the California coast was in sight. This announcement was received with delight by every passenger on board, but none heard it with greater joy than Ashton and Batty. A few hours later the steamer was alongside of the wharf at Port Los Angeles and discharging her passengers and freight.

Our heroes were among the very first to walk down the gang plank and to enter the cars that, thirty minutes later, landed them in the "City of the Angels," and at the Hollenbeck hotel which they selected as their temporary stopping place.

Notwithstanding they had every day during the voyage discussed in all its phases, the subject that was of supremest interest to both, yet

they had matured no plans in detail as to their movements in the immediate future. It was agreed that they would, for the present make their home in Los Angeles.

"Here from our temporary headquarters," said Ashton, "we might send out letters of enquiry to the steamship companies, the mayors of coast cities and others; we might also consult newspaper files for information about the wrecking of the Osceola and the rescue of passengers from the ill-fated ship. What do you think as to the wisdom of my suggestion?"

"It meets with my unreserved approval," replied Batty, "I can think of no better plan."

On the second day after their arrival while Ashton was in his room writing to the officials of the coast towns soliciting the information so much desired, Mr. Batty called at the office of the *Los Angeles Times* with the copy of an advertisement he wished inserted and which was an enquiry for information of the names and addresses of any survivors of the wrecked Osceola. After contracting for the printing he asked permission to examine the files of San Francisco and Portland newspapers. He was politely informed that correct files of two of the San Francisco daily papers were kept in that office which he was at liberty to consult, but that copies of Portland publications were not preserved, but might be found in the public reading room at the city hall building.

A careful examination of the columns of the San Francisco *Examiner* and *Chronicle* resulted in failure to discover any account of the picking up of the small boats of the Osceola. This was most

discouraging as the steamer was wrecked about one hundred miles southwesterly from San Francisco, and, thought Batty, if any of the passengers were rescued they would in all probability have been discovered nearer to that city than any other place, and their rescue would undoubtedly have been noted in the daily papers. Still the absence from the papers of any such information does not prove that they were not saved. Our boat was discovered and we were saved as well as the boat Col. Higsbee and Ashton were in by Western bound ships. It may have been that the two other small boats were rescued by out-going steamers, and the objects of our search may now be alive and well somewhere on the other side of the Pacific ocean. Well, we are here now, and no effort must be spared to ascertain their fate. Now the storm that destroyed the Osceola came from a southerly direction. The wind would and did drive the small boats to the northward and past the Golden Gate. The objects of our search may have been discovered and rescued by some vessel bound for Portland, Seattle, or some port to the northward. "Yes, I will go to the public reading rooms and carefully examine the newspapers published in those cities."

In answer to his request for copies of Portland papers the polite young lady attendant handed Batty files of the *Portland Oregonian.* He took his seat at the table, opened the newspapers of the latest dates, and going back over the files, rapidly but very carefully scanned the columns. For two or more hours he patiently devoted himself to the search, and was almost ready to aban-

don it when his eyes ran on to the following paragraph:

"*Arrived*—At this port, this morning the French steamer, *Josephine,* Capt. Reguet commanding, with a cargo of merchandise and 39 passengers. Among the latter were Mrs. Col. Higsbee and daughter, of Melbourne, Australia, who, with five or six others, had been picked up from a small boat belonging to the wrecked steamer Osceola, about seventy-five miles off the California cost northwest of San Francisco."

As though impelled by some sudden and mighty impulse or shocked by some impending danger, Mr. Batty sprang to his feet with an ejaculation that startled those near him, and several minutes elapsed before he was calm enough to copy the item on a slip of paper. This, however, he soon did, and still manifesting a high degree of excitement, he hurriedly left the room and proceeded to the hotel as quickly as rapid walking would take him there. Entering the office he was about to step into the elevator when he met Mr. Ashton, who was preparing to go out. Rushing up to him, his face all illuminated with animation, he grasped the engineer by the arm and almost dragged him to a seat, meanwhile exclaiming:

"They were saved! They were saved, Ashton! Thank God, they were saved! Look at this, I copied it from the *Portland Oregonian!*"

He thrust the paper into the hands of his friend and fairly danced for joy. Ashton grew ashen pale and his hands trembled violently as he grasped the slip of paper and rapidly ran his eyes over the writing. Finishing it he arose

from his seat, grasped the hand of the lawyer and put his arm about him and said: "Yes, thank God, Batty, they were saved and we will find them. This is one of the happiest moments of my life. Here let us sit down; we are excited now and are in no proper mood to lay deliberate plans for the discovery of our loved ones. That we will do when we are calmer. Just now we will rejoice over the glorious information we have received."

The two men read and re-read the newspaper item. After a time Ashton remarked: "Tom Lawson was in the boat with Lilly and her mother when it shoved off from the Osceola, and was of course among the saved. I am glad of that, and yet there is something about that man that does not impress me favorably. I am somewhat prejudiced against him, but my aversion is not caused by jealousy notwithstanding the fact that he sought the favor of Miss Higsbee and was favorably looked upon by Colonel and Mrs. Higsbee. How long had you been acquainted with Lawson before you introduced him to me?"

"Only a few months," said Batty. "I know nothing of his antecedents or life before meeting him in Melbourne."

As the two men sat in the hotel office thus conversing they had not noticed a gentleman occupying a chair very near to them who overhead all that passed between them. He was a man about twenty-five years of age, powerfully built, of dark complexion, with an intelligent and resolute face, and was evidently of Spanish descent. He had paid but little attention to the conversation between Batty and Ashton until the name,

Tom Lawson, was spoken, then he manifested a keen but in no sense an obtrusive interest in what was passing between the two men After a little further conversation in which Mr. Batty expressed the suspicion that Lawson was not the man he pretended to be, Ashton said:

"Come, let us go to our room and decide on our future movements."

They were about to step into the elevator when the stranger approached them and with a smile and a polite bow, said:

"Gentlemen, pardon what may seem to you to be an unwarranted act of impropriety and even audacity on my part, for thus addressing total strangers, but I could not help hearing a portion of the conversation that has just taken place between you. I heard mentioned the name of Tom Lawson. Now I am acquainted with a man whose full name is Thomas Lawson Hartwell, but who for reasons best known to himself sometimes calls himself Thomas Lawson and at other times assumes other aliases. I am seeking that man and have been for several months. My name in Don Castano and my residence is Lima, South America. Here is my card, gentlemen, and if you will do me the very great kindness to grant me an interview, I will impart to you some information about the man who calls himself Thomas Lawson that may interest you. Besides, gentlemen, I infer from what I overheard of the conversation between you, that your acquaintance with the man is of recent date. If so, then you may be able to render me valuable service—a service which will be greatly appreciated if you can inform me as to his whereabouts."

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Castano," said Ashton, extending his hand, "and I assure you that you have been guilty of no impropriety in addressing us as you have. We shall be pleased to have the interview you desire. My name is Henry Ashton, of Melbourne, Australia, and this is my friend, George Batty, attorney at law, of the same city. I now extend to you a cordial invitation to accompany us to our rooms above, where we may hold a conference without interruption. I know that my friend here will join me in this invitation."

"Certainly," remarked Batty. "Come right along with us."

The conference between the three men proved to be one of unusual interest to each. By the careful comparing of the description given by Castano of the man for whom he was looking, the conclusion was reached that, without doubt, the man known to Ashton and Batty as Thomas Lawson, was none other than Thomas L. Hartwell, forger, swindler, and convict—known to Castano as the villain who had married his sister under false pretense, absconded with his father's money, and who had eluded detection and arrest for two years.

Mr. Castano was greatly pleased over the accidental meeting with Ashton and Batty. Through them he had gained information of Hartwell's later movements, and he now reasoned that his search for the rascal would be less perplexing. That he was somewhere in the United States was pretty certain, and no doubt was within the State of California. He would now redouble his efforts

to find and arrest his man and convey him back to Peru to answer for his crimes.

Ashton and Batty were also gratified over the meeting with the Spanish gentleman, for through him, they had learned the true character of the man who had obtruded himself upon them as a social equal and companion, and what was infinitely worse, had endeavored to court the favor of Lilly Higsbee.

At a later meeting of the three gentlemen, and after Castano had listened to the story of the wrecking of the Osceola, the rescue of the occupants of the small boats, and had read the newspaper account of the safe arrival at Portland of Mrs. Higsbee and daughter, and had learned that Hartwell was in the same boat with the women and was rescued with them, and after being told of Lawson's effort to win the favor of Miss Higsbee whom he knew was the only child of a millionaire, he remarked:

"I am free to say that I do not like the looks of that situation. There are two innocent, confiding women, shipwrecked, separated from husband and friends, cast among strangers, perhaps not acquainted with a single individual in California except one man, and he an accomplished scoundrel. Why, that is precisely a condition of things that Hartwell would be happy in. No, gentlemen, I do not like the situation. I know Tom Hartwell so well that I am almost certain that he will in some way, succed in victimizing those ladies as that the sun will rise tomorrow morning."

"I have been from the first extremely solicitous for the welfare of Mrs. Higsbee and her

daughter," said Ashton, as he paced to and fro across the floor, "and now since I have learned what a rogue Lawson is, I am doubly, aye an hundred fold more anxious about them than ever before. Mr. Batty, we must prosecute our search for them with all the energy of which we are capable."

"Yes," replied Batty," no time is to be lost. As the women were landed at Portland we must proceed to that city, and if they cannot be found there, as I fear they will not be, then we must extend our search to other localities."

"Your suggestion is a good one," replied Castano, "and as the object of my search is Hartwell, who I doubt not is following up the ladies for whom you are looking, I shall with your consent join you and we will work together. I am something of a detective, and I may be of some service to you and you may very materially aid me."

This suggestion met with the most hearty approval by our heroes, and it was arranged after further conferences, that Ashton and Batty should proceed immediately to Portland where they would endeavor to gain what information was available in regard to the landing of the ladies from the Josephine, and locate them if they were still in that city; if they had left there, then try to trace them to their present location. Castano would go to San Francisco and make that place his headquarters for a few weeks or until he found Hartwell, or till he became convinced that it would be useless to remain longer. Letters were to be exchanged frequently between the men, reporting progress.

The next train leaving Los Angeles carried the three men northward toward the places agreed upon for future operations. Reaching San Francisco the next day Mr. Castano stopped at that city, while Ashton and Batty continued on to Portland.

After Mr. Castano had selected a suitable lodging house he began immediately to mature his plans for instituting a thorough search for the villain he had long been hunting. He reasoned that if Hartwell were in the city he would be a frequent visitor of the gambling houses, saloons and other disreputable resorts. Well disguised, he sallied out each night, for several successive days and made the rounds of the dives, or as many of them as he could visit between the hours of nine and one o'clock.

He had now been in the great city five days and so far his search had been fruitless. On the sixth day he called on Captain Osgood who had more than a local reputation as a detective of large experience and great courage and sagacity, and engaged his professional services. After giving that gentleman a minute description of Hartwell, the Captain said:

"I think I have seen the man you want. I believe I know him. Mr. Castano, come to my office at 11:00 o'clock to-night and I will take you to a gambling joint frequented by a man who answers the description of the person for whom you are looking."

At the appointed time Mr. Castano called at the detective's office and rang the bell. Capt. Osgood himself answered the summons. There confronting him stood a well dressed gentleman,

with full beard nearly white, and hair of the same color, apparently fifty or fifty-five years of age. He made a polite bow and asked: "Is Captain Osgood in?"

"That is my name, sir," said the Captain, "and who are you and what is your business with me at this late hour?"

"Ah, Captain," said Castano, "my disguise must be pretty good if it so completely conceals my identity as to deceive San Francisco's veteran detective. I am Don Castano, and am ready now to go and see the suspect."

"Well, well," exclaimed Capt. Osgood. "Your make-up is superb. I would have made a solemn oath that I had never seen you before, but step in, I will be ready in a moment. By the way, Mr. Castano, have you the proper legal papers investing you with authority to arrest and detain your man if you find him."

"Certainly," replied the Peruvian, "Hartwell is under indictment in Peru, and I have the authority from the Governor of California to arrest and transport him to the scene of his crimes."

Within thirty minutes from the time the above conversation took place, the two men entered a gambling den known to the police as one of the wickedest resorts on the Pacific coast. In the front room was the bar and billiard tables, and even at this late hour there was a crowd of men playing, drinking and lounging; but it was not here that the detective expected to find the man he wished to point out to Castano. The gaming tables were in rooms farther to the rear entered by narrow hallways. Castano and the detective attracted no attention as they leisurely walked

down the hall and entered the rooms where, nightly, considerable sums of money were lost and won. There were a number of tables in the first room they entered, around which men were seated engaged in cardplaying for money. Entering this place the Captain and his companion halted and stood a few feet from the door at which they entered when the detective rapidly ran his eye over the fifty or sixty men at the various tables. He was about to speak to Castano saying that the subject was not in that room, when from an adjoining apartment, stepped a man who walked with a rapid stride toward the door they had just entered. In a moment he passed out. As he did so Capt. Osgood caught the Peruvian by the arm, gave it a sharp grip accompanied by a signal to follow him. The two men turned upon their heels and stepped after the man who had just passed them. They walked down the corridor, through the saloon and to the sidewalk. There was a great throng of people passing, and for a few moments the suspect was lost sight of, but knowing the direction he had taken, the two men walked after him and quickened their pace as they did so. They soon came up close behind him, so close that Castano might easily have laid his hand upon his shoulder. Up to this time the South American had been unable to get a look into the face of the man. The three walked along to a corner of the street when signaling a street car, the man stepped aboard and took an outside seat well toward the front end. Osgood and Castano boarded the car in the rear. The latter changed his position so that he might get a good view of the suspect through the glass

door. After eyeing him intently for a few moments and hearing his voice as he conversed with the conductor about his fare, Castano beckoned to the detective who advanced to his side, when he said in a whisper:

"He is well disguised, but he is the man I want. I shall place him under arrest when he steps from the car."

"Are you well armed," asked Capt. Osgood. "Of course I will assist in his capture, but it will be well to be prepared for trouble."

"Yes, I am armed," replied the Peruvian in a low voice, "but I will have no use for a gun. Hartwell is not only a villain but a dastardly coward. Bravery and manliness are not in his nature."

As they talked the car came to a stop when the man who was being followed and who was sitting on the outside, quickly stepped off and rapidly walked down a cross street. The detectives left the car as soon as was practicable but their movements were impeded a minute or two owing to the alighting of several passengers from the inside who blocked the doorway, and when they stepped to the ground Hartwell was quite a distance away. They walked after him but did not come up to him until after he had entered the door of a lodging house and had disappeared. The pursuers hesitated a moment and then slowly walked by the place. Castano broke the silence by saying:

"Well, the villain escaped us, but we now know where to find him and we will soon have him in irons. Captain, you go to the rear of the house and guard the back exits, and I will go to the

front and ring the bell and ask for Thomas Lawson and when he comes to speak to me I will put these handcuffs upon him."

"Yes," said the detective, "we will adopt the plan you suggest if you are ready. But it had occurred to me when we started out to-night to do no more than to identify and locate your man. It is now about midnight. If we arrest him now we will have to guard him till to-morrow as the officers of the prison as well as the officials before whom you will have to present him with the requisition papers, have retired for the night. We have now found your man; you know his hiding place and at least one of his habitual resorts. There is no indication that he intends to leave the city. You can take him to-morrow, or the next day, as well as now, and if you have any other business to attend to before leaving the city with your prisoner, I suggest that you defer the arrest for a day or until you are fully prepared."

"Your suggestion is correct, Captain," replied Castano. "I was so anxious to get the handcuffs on the rascal, that I forgot the lateness of the hour, and that I have some important matters to attend to before I could leave the city with my prisoner. Besides that there are two gentlemen, now in Portland, who are interested in Hartwell, or if they have no concern about him personally, they do have for two women whose present whereabouts they are endeavoring to ascertain, and they have good reason for believing that Hartwell has knowledge of their location. Yes, I will postpone the arrest one day, or perhaps, two or three days, or till I can communicate with my friends in Portland, and secure their presence

here. Consider yourself employed, Captain, till after this arrest is made. Hartwell has doubtless retired. He suspects nothing. I desire you, Captain, to detail two or more of your most efficient detectives to shadow Hartwell day and night for two or three days, or until the hour that I decide upon for his arrest. Here is $100.00 to apply as part payment of your fees for the service you have rendered me and for the work I wish you to do. Instruct your men also to take particular notice if he calls at any hotel or lodging house upon two ladies—one an elderly woman, the other young and handsome, and if so, to make a memorandum of the street and number where stopping, and if possible ascertain the names of the women."

"All right," responded Captain Osgood, as he placed the money in his pocket. "I shall do as you have ordered. I have in my agency several detectives of long experience, superior tact, and thorough reliability. Drop into my office two or three times a day, and I shall be able to inform you of every move that your man is making, and if there are any women in the case that he has anything to do with, my men will ascertain all about them as well as about him."

Within one hour from this time Castano had summoned Ashton and Batty by telegram, from Portland, and but a few hours had elapsed before those gentlemen were aboard the fast express train en route for San Francisco.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CASTANO INTERRUPTS THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY. SHOCK TO MRS. HIGSBEE FROM WHICH SHE DOES NOT RECOVER.

We will now direct our attention to Mrs. and Miss Higsbee. Since we last looked in upon them they had lived a quiet life. Nothing unusual had occurred except an illness of the elder lady who had never been strong. While the indisposition was not of an alarming nature, yet it largely incapacitated her from going out. Lilly was her almost constant companion. She could not be induced to absent herself from her mother's bedside even for an hour. The servant girl was faithful and kind and often begged Lilly to permit her to be of more practical service to her mistress, but though Miss Higsbee did not often betray her feelings in words spoken, yet she did feel that now she had but one dear friend on earth—her mother. Though the lodgers of the house, were social and spoke very kindly, yet she could not force herself to be cheerful and happy. She read but little; she had no interest in anything or in anybody except her mother; she almost abhorred amusements, and as to her prospective marriage now to take place in a few days, she thought of it only in a dazed melancholy way, and with feelings such as she might have if she were invited to attend the funeral of a friend. At the time of which we write the wedding is but four days distant and yet the bride

has made no preparation for that important event. She is spiritless and sad.

Lawson now called every day. He had seemed to entertain profound concern for Mrs. Higsbee —her comfort and welfare and he left no opportunity unimproved to make a favorable impression upon her and that innocent, deluded lady, was thoroughly infatuated with him.

Tom Lawson was a tactful actor. Toward Miss Lilly he assumed the air and manner of the sincere lover and honorable man. He fully realized that he was playing for high stakes and he must guard every word spoken and every act, and must commit no blunders. Every day he brought her a bouquet of beautiful flowers, and each time when he presented them to her he reiterated his undying love for her. Miss Higsbee received these flowers and with a faint and sad but enforced smile, responded, "thanks," but to the outbursts of declarations of love and adoration, she seldom vouchsafed any reply, but soon diverted the conversation to other subjects. She did not love the man, and her mind was struggling with the problem whether any conceivable conditions of things could occur in the world that would justify a woman in marrying a man she does not love. Her intuitions and womanly instincts said "no," while her reason, and her sense of duty to her mother, and the dying request of her father, said "yes." Sometimes she was almost decided to peremptorily decline to have the marriage ceremony consummated, and then she would remember her father's last request, and her mother's great anxiety for her to become the wife of Lawson, and, thus vacillating and halting

between these two influences, she drifted along the victim of a relentless fate.

No elaborate preparations were intended for the wedding which was to take place on the following Thursday evening at 4:00 p. m. in the parlor of the lodging house occupied by Mrs. and Miss Higsbee. Mrs. Higsbee was not able physically to go to the church and it was her wish that the ceremony should take place at the house. Lawson, while professing that it was his desire to be married before a large congregation, with much ostentatious display, adroitly planned to have it as quiet as possible, while Lilly, having no heart in the matter, and going as she would to the altar as the sheep goes to the slaughter, approved of the suggestion to have the marriage take place at the house.

The eventful evening at length arrived. Lilly had made but little preparation for the ceremony. To please her mother she consented to be attired in her best apparel, and carrying out the wishes of Mrs. Higsbee, had invited the landlady and two or three lodgers of the house to be present. Lawson arrived an hour before the time designated for the ceremony, accompanied by a clergyman of an obscure suburban church. Lilly and the servant had assisted her mother to repair to the parlor. The company consisting of nine persons, had now assembled. As the clock indicated the time as 3:55, the minister took his position at one end of the room, and requested the candidates for matrimony to arise to their feet. As they complied with this request, the face of Mrs. Higsbee was wreathed in smiles; Lawson presented an outward appearance of calmness and

self-possession, but the careful observer might have detected a suppressed nervousness and an anxious expression in his deep-set and cunning eyes. As for the bride, she was as pale as a statue, and almost as undemonstrative. She slowly arose to her feet and stepped forward supported by Lawson but there was no elasticity in her step. In her eyes was a far away expression; her hands were cold; her lips were bloodless, and her whole manner evinced the abhorrence which had flooded her soul and almost overwhelmed her at the thought of the profane act she was about to commit. Taking a step or two forward she suddenly stopped and impetuously and with considerable force, jerked her hand from the arm of her escort, then for a second seemed frightened, then somewhat regaining her self-possession, again took hold of Lawson's arm and slowly moved forward.

The parlor in which the marriage was to take place, was situated on the first floor, one door of which opened into a short but wide corridor leading to the office. Just as the clergyman was about to begin the ceremony, the sound of footsteps was heard in the hall. Then there was stillness for a moment, and the minister had given utterance to one or two sentences when the door swung wide open and before the clock on the mantel had ticked ten seconds three men—strangers—stepped in and stood in the rear of the couple and facing the minister. The clergyman looked up inquiringly as one of the men uttered the words, "stop this!" At this, Lawson, with the agility of an acrobat, turned and faced the men.

"Why this interruption, gentlemen?" he ejaculated fiercely. "Who are you that you thus intrude your presence at this time and place."

As he said this one of the strangers, like a flash, drew from his pocket a revolver, leveled it at the breast of the bridegroom, and with a firm voice and cool and deliberate manner, as he jerked his false whiskers from his face, said:

"I have at last found you, Tom Hartwell. You know me. You are my prisoner. Make no resistance at your peril. Officers bind the villain and remove him to the city jail."

At this the two officers sprang forward and clutched Lawson, slipping hand cuffs about his wrists, and without a word being spoken by them or him, hustled him through the door and into the hallway, loading him a few minutes later into a carriage in waiting, and drove him away to the prison.

As Lawson was being handcuffed, Lilly gave forth a suppressed scream and dropped into a chair covering her face with her hands, and her slight frame trembled with emotion. Mrs. Higsbee clasped her hands convulsively and with a cry and shudder swooned into a state of partial unconsciousness, while the minister and the spectators stood like so many human beings who had been instantly paralyzed by some mighty mysterious force.

After a brief pause Castano said: "Ladies and Gentlemen! This action on my part seems to you to be a most high-handed and flagrant outrage. Under any ordinary circumstances it would be most inexcusable. Had I not the best of reasons for doing what I have done, I would be a

criminal and deserve the severest punishment. But I am justified both morally and legally in placing this man under arrest, and preventing this proposed marriage. He is a criminal of the deepest dye. He has a living wife, and child. She is my sister. Her heart has been broken and her life wrecked by this man; he robbed my father; he is a forger, a liar and a thief. Had I not prevented this marriage he would have committed another crime—that of bigamy. For several days I have had detectives upon his trail. Through them I learned of this contemplated marriage. While I deeply deplored the necessity of inflicting pain on two innocent, confiding and wickedly deceived women, I felt that it were better that I do so than to allow this villain to consummate an illegal union which would result in deeper anguish to them. To you young lady—you who have been so wickedly deceived, I have come as a deliverer. To the elder lady, whom I infer is your mother, I say when you and your daughter are fully apprised of the criminal character of this man, you will feel that you have been placed under profound and lasting obligations to me for the act I have just performed, though now you may regard me as an evil pretender. I shall communicate with you later, and furnish you proof of the blackness of Thomas Lawson Hartwell's life. Here is my card, bearing my name and address, and I shall be at your service until I leave the city with my prisoner three days hence." So saying, Mr. Castano made a low bow and withdrew from the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

ASHTON AGAIN MEETS MISS HIGSBEE.

The reader would not be particularly interested in all that transpired during the next twenty-four hours in the house in which Mrs. Higsbee and her daughter had apartments, hence the writer will omit the details of much that transpired. After Lilly had somewhat recovered from the shock which she experienced at the interruption of the ceremony, and the statement of Castano, she found that her mother required her constant attention. Mrs. Higsbee was almost speechless and was bordering on spasms. With the assistance of others she was removed to her own apartments, where, for several hours, she sobbed and moaned over the occurrence of the exciting events that had transpired in the parlor. "Oh! oh! oh!" she would exclaim, over and over again. "How dreadful! how dreadful!" Lilly summoned all her mental and physical powers and lovingly and incessantly administered to her every want, and by wise and loving words spoken, succeeded in a measure in soothing her and restoring her to a calmer state of mind. The young lady carefully refrained from any extended comment with her mother on the arrest of Lawson, and the stopping of the marriage ceremony. When pressed for her opinions, she would only reply: "Dear mother, let us trust in the goodness of God. He has sent his angels to watch over us. It may be all for the best."

Lilly herself had not fully recovered from the

supreme surprise that she had experienced. She had no knowledge as to the truthfulness or falseness of the statement that Lawson had a wife and was a criminal except the statement of the stranger. Yet she was happier than she had been since the sinking of the Osceola. Deep down in her heart was a wild gladness that the marriage had been prevented, not alone from what Castano had said, but from an intuition—the whispering to her inner consciousness, as if from an invisible spirit, that the stranger had told the truth about Thomas Lawson. She believed that she had been saved from an awful fate through the intervention of a kind providence or her guardian angel.

"It may be," she softly said to herself, "that the spirit of Henry Ashton, my beloved, may have been the one who prevented my falling into the clutches of that man."

Thus she mused for hours as she sat at the bedside of her mother. Alternating between joy over her escape and anxiety for her mother, the night wore away, and before the rays of the morning sun began to lighten up the eastern sky she was rejoiced to see that her mother was enjoying a sound and apparently refreshing sleep, from which she hoped she might awaken with renewed physical and mental strength. Reassuring herself that her mother was resting well and that she might not require her wakeful attention for a brief time, she softly assumed a reclining position on a couch without disrobing, and, though not yet over the effects of the recent excitement, she was fatigued and soon fell asleep. The sun had ascended high above the eastern horizon before either mother or daughter awoke. Their slumber

might have been protracted several hours longer had Lilly not been awakened by a rapping on the door of her room. Quickly springing to her feet she answered the summons. It was the landlady, who had come to announce that two gentlemen had called and they desired to see Miss Higsbee in the parlor. They had sent up no cards, but had instructed her to say to the lady that they were personal friends from Melbourne, Australia.

"Who can they be," thought Lilly. "Some of father's acquaintances, no doubt, who, having business in America, have heard of our being in San Francisco, and have called to pay their respects and inquire about father."

Glancing at her mother a moment, and observing that she was still sleeping, Miss Higsbee replied:

"Say to the visitors that I will see them in a few minutes. I will call the servant to remain with mother during my absence, and will be down directly."

As her apparel had not been changed since she stood in the parlor as a bride the evening before, but a short time was required in which to make herself presentable to callers, and, after summoning the servant, she quietly left the room, closing the door behind her, and descended to the parlor. The door was ajar, and gently pushing it open, she walked in. She did not at first notice the visitors, who were seated in a shaded part of the room, and had advanced to the center of the apartment before she observed them. As they arose to their feet she addressed them, saying:

"Gentlemen, I have come in response to your request. What is your pleasure?"

As she thus spoke, one of the men stepped toward her so suddenly that for a moment the young lady was startled, and she withdrew two or three steps. The advancing man, with illy suppressed excitement, and with his voice choked by emotion, exclaimed: "Lilly, dear Lilly! Don't you know me? I am Henry Ashton, alive and well, and this is Mr. Batty. Thank God I have found you at last!"

For a few seconds Miss Higsbee stood as one struck dumb, then throwing her arms aloft and with an exclamation of joy, rushed into the open arms of her long-lost lover, whom she had mourned as dead and gone from her forever.

Let the curtain now drop and the reunited lovers be left to themselves for a season. Mr. Batty, being a man of sound judgment and wise discretion, silently withdrew to the office, and, lighting a cigar, found a comfortable seat and a morning newspaper, and awaited future developments. That he was happy—very happy—was most apparent to the most casual observer. After finishing his cigar and newspaper, he went out for a short stroll. Returning an hour later he was surprised and almost alarmed at finding Ashton in the office summoning a physician through the telephone. In answer to his impatient inquiries, Mr. Batty was informed that Mrs. Higsbee was alarmingly ill. Not long after Lilly had left her mother to meet the visitors in the parlor, she was summoned to return. The elderly lady had awakened, but was unable to speak and breathed with great difficulty. Ashton had accompanied Lilly to the sick chamber, and seeing the critical condition of Mrs. Higsbee, had descended to the office, from

whence he telephoned for a physician. Dr. Randolph, who had been summoned, was soon at the bedside of the sick woman, and, after a hasty examination, said:

"The lady is suffering from a severe stroke of paralysis. I do not know what may have been her recent experience, but the symptoms would seem to indicate that she has received some sudden mental shock, or passed through some unusual excitement. She may linger some time, but I fear the attack may prove fatal."

The doctor was correct in his diagnosis. The patient was conscious, and, after a time could, by a painful effort, speak a few words to her attendants, but was utterly helpless—was totally unable to move her limbs. Lilly was in the deepest distress over her mother's condition, and was most devoted and constant in her ministrations. The inexpressible happiness which flooded her whole being over the meeting with her lover, was sadly clouded by the fear that her mother might die. Though endowed by nature with a great deal of fortitude and courage, this dangerous illness of her mother and the information of the death of her father, of which Ashton had fully informed her, but which for prudential reasons were kept from her mother, might have crushed her, had Henry Ashton not been present to counsel and support her. Mr. Ashton promptly stepped to the front in this emergency and assumed every responsibility growing out of it. At his first appearance at the bedside, Lilly said:

"Mother, here is Henry Ashton, alive and well. He was not drowned. God preserved his life and sent him to us. Lawson is a villain; he wickedly

deceived us. I never loved him. I do love Mr. Ashton with all the intensity of which a true woman is capable. We are betrothed and long have been. Will you not forgive him and bless our proposed union?"

At this the dying woman replied in faint yet audible words with difficulty spoken :

"Yes, yes, my dear child. I freely, gladly forgive him if I have anything to forgive. I ask you both to forgive me for my sad error. I was deceived in Lawson. I undervalued the nobleness of Henry Ashton. I not only consent to your marriage, but it is my wish that it shall take place immediately, before I leave you forever. This is my only, my last request. I have but a brief time to live. I shall be content to go after I see you the happy wife of so noble and good a man. Mr. Ashton, draw near to me. You love my daughter. She is worthy of your love and you are deserving of her. I freely give her to you and may God bless you both."

The dying woman could say no more, and the young couple stood still for several minutes each clasping the hand of the other, each too deeply affected to utter a single word. Lilly sobbed audibly, and as her emotion deepened, she grasped more firmly the hand of the man she adored. Mr. Ashton gently led her to a seat upon the sofa, and sat down by her side.

Later in the day, after a brief consultation with Dr. Randolph and Mr. Batty, and in compliance with the request of Mrs. Higsbee, again repeated, it was determined that the marriage should take place immediately, as it was the opinion of the doctor that his patient would last but a few hours

longer. This being decided, not an hour had elapsed when Mr. Batty returned with a license and a clergyman, and before thirty minutes more had passed Henry Ashton and Lilly Higsbee stood at the bedside of the woman, now rapidly passing away, and in the presence of Mr. Batty, the attending physician, and a few inmates of the house, were pronounced husband and wife. Mrs. Higsbee, though very low, listened attentively to the words of the minister, and at their conclusion, with a smile of satisfaction, faintly yet audibly pronounced her blessing. Soon after she closed her eyes never to be again opened in this world.

We shall not tax the patience of the reader with the details of all that transpired during the year subsequent to the death of Mrs. Higsbee and the marriage of Miss Higsbee to Henry Ashton. Soon after the transpiring of those events Don Castano transported his prisoner to the scene of his crimes in South America, and, after a speedy trial, Thomas Lawson Hartwell was sentenced to serve in the penitentiary for a term of twenty-five years. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, after a few months spent in visiting with his mother and other friends and acquaintances, returned to Melbourne. Mr. Batty proceeded to Omaha to attend to the business of Col. Higsbee, but found, as he had suspected from information received from Lilly Ashton, that Lawson had compromised the suit, and appro-

priated the money he had received to his own use. He therefore shortly after also sailed for Melbourne. It will be remembered that Col. Higsbee, just prior to his death on shipboard, executed his last will and testament, bequeathing all his large estate to his wife and daughter, in the event that they were alive and that such legal instrument was entrusted to the custody of George Batty. It is therefore obvious that, on the decease of Mrs. Higsbee, Mrs. Lilly Ashton became the sole heir to her father's large estate.

On his return to Melbourne, Mr. Ashton found it necessary to resign his position as a railroad engineer and devote most of his time and energies to attending to the property interests belonging to his wife. Although he was now a rich man, his interest in Socialism and the welfare of the toiling masses did not abate. Large wealth wrought no change in him. He was the same kind-hearted, social, generous gentleman as when he handled the engine's throttle. His heart still beat in sympathy for the landless, propertyless wageworker, who, deprived of the comforts of life by a hard, relentless economic system, is struggling for better conditions for himself and those dependent upon him.

One evening after dinner, while sitting in the parlor with his wife, he said:

"Dear Lilly, I have just finished reading an article in an American publication on the industrial conditions as they exist in that country. Now the people of the United States are perhaps the most intelligent and progressive people in the world today. In many respects they enjoy the largest measure of political freedom, and yet there are

certain influences to work there that must inevitably lead to serious trouble in the not distant future."

"To what do you allude in particular?" asked his wife.

"Why, the laboring people, who include farmers as well as wage-workers, are restless and discontented. They assert, and that truthfully, that they produce all the wealth, and yet do not get but about one-sixth of what they produce. Great trusts have been organized that have monopolized lands, and oil, and coal, and timber, and the mineral mines, and water power, and lighting plants, and meat, and breadstuffs, and clothing, and transportation—in fact, nearly everything. Thus having a monopoly of all production and distribution, they have ignored the law of supply and demand, have, in fact, suspended that law by arbitrarily fixing artificial prices. They have advanced the cost of living forty per cent in a few years, while the wages of the workers have advanced but eight or ten per cent. They control the utterances of all the great newspapers, which are compelled by them to so publish articles as to deceive the masses; they control the courts so that when working men strike for an increase of wages they may be enjoined; they control the army to the end that if the court injunctions are disregarded, the workers may be shot. They so manage their trust business that they make a net profit on their investments of from fifty to five hundred per cent. They live luxuriously, while the millions of working classes are barely able to live at all. There are about six hundred of the more important trusts. Their honest valuation

is about one and a quarter billions of dollars, but they have stocked them for about seven billions. They have thus flooded the country with five and three-quarter billions of watered or fraudulent stocks. It is hard to believe that men laying claim to honesty and many of them professing to be Christians, could be guilty of such dishonest methods. A great and disastrous financial collapse awaits the United States. The total amount of money in that Republic of gold, silver and paper is but two billions of dollars, and still the speculative and stock-watering, interest-gathering classes have succeeded in piling up an indebtedness on the people of the United States the appalling sum of sixty billions of dollars, or thirty times more than all the money existing in the Republic. They gather a crop of interest annually from the people, of three thousand millions of dollars, or more than the total value of all the staple crops and the output of all the mines of that country. In due time the bubble will burst and millions of innocent people will be crushed by reason of the greed of the capitalistic gambling classes."

"Yes, husband," said Lilly, "I have also been reading along that line. Everything you have mentioned I have read about, but to me the wickedest practice of the trust monopolists is the enslaving of tender children of the poor, not only in America but in England, and other parts of Europe. I have been gathering some statistics on the subject, and will write an article for some of the publications not yet owned by the trusts, and try to arouse the women of civilization to an appreciation of this horrible evil. Shall I read some of the statistics to you, Henry?"

"Certainly, my dear," replied Ashton, "I am rejoiced to see that you are interested in the matter."

"Well," said Mrs. Ashton, "in England 300,000 little children are working like slaves in factories and other places, and their wage is from 12½ cents to $1.25 per week, and there are 600,000 paupers in that country. This does not seem to trouble anybody there except the Socialists. At the late coronation of the King the nobility who add nothing to the wealth of the world, wore diamonds and apparel valued at hundreds of millions. Not long before the death of Victoria she gave a banquet, and the plate on the table was worth ten millions of dollars. Can that be a Christian country?

"In the United States the condition of the working people is little better than in England, while child-slavery may be seen in a more horrible form. I have some statistics from several States of that Republic, but you know statistics are dry. Shall I read them to you, husband?"

"Most assuredly," replied Ashton. "Every man and woman with a spark of sympathy in their souls for their unfortunate fellowman, especially for the abused little ones, should be interested in such subjects and should put forth his best efforts to emancipate these little helpless children."

"Well," said Mrs. Ashton, "the State Labor Commissioner of North Carolina reports that there are 261 cotton mills, in that State, in which 38,637 persons are employed. Of this number there are 3,698 boys and 4,007 girls. Total children employed, 7,605. The average daily wage of those children is 22 cents. (The average daily

wage of men is 57 cents and of women 39 cents.) There are about 450 cotton mills in the Southern States.

"Gunton's Magazine says: 'The ages of these children range from 6 to 12 years.'

"The Commissioner further says: 'I have talked with a little boy of 7 years who worked for forty nights in Alabama, and another child who at 6 years old had been on the night shift eleven months. Little boys turned out at 2 o'clock in the morning, afraid to go home, would beg a clerk in the mill for permission to lie down on the office floor. In one city mill in the South, a doctor said he had personally amputated the fingers of more than one hundred children, mangled in the mill machinery, and that a horrible form of dropsy occurs frequently among the over-worked children.'

"One of the editors of the Cincinnati Post wrote: 'I secured entrance to the People's Mills of Montgomery, Alabama, which manufactures sheeting for the China trade. In the spinning-room I saw boys and girls so small that their efforts to perform their work were absolutely painful. In reaching up to join the ends of the broken threads they were obliged to strain and stretch every muscle and sinew of their frail bodies, and some were so small they were compelled to stand on their tip-toes. Their day's work was twelve hours.'

"Irene Mackfadyn wrote: 'The physical, mental and moral effect of these long hours of toil and confinement on the children is indescribably sad. Mill children are so stunted that every foreman will tell you that you cannot judge their ages.

The lint forms in their lungs a perfect cultivating medium for tuberculosis and pneumonia, and consumption is common among them. Many die after a few years of this service.'

"The New York World says that about 6,000 boys and girls of tender age work in glass and other factories in New Jersey, and Governor Murphy of that State reports that children of both sexes 6 and 7 years old work seventeen and eighteen hours per day, with but a few minutes for rest, dropping back at their toil, worn out and actually driven back to finish the long hours for which they are paid two to three cents per hour.

"The Washington Post, commenting on child labor in the South, says: 'The average life of the children after they go into the mills is four years. It would be less cruel for a State to have children painlessly put to death than it is to permit them to be ground to death by this awful process.'

"Years ago," continued Mrs. Ashton, "when child slavery in England was more than it is now in that country, Mrs. Browning wrote a poem protesting against it. It describes existing conditions in the United States to-day. I will read it to you:

"DO YOU HEAR THE CHILDREN WEEPING, O, MY BROTHERS.

"Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And that cannot stop the tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—

But the young, young children, O, my brothers
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

"And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly,
Let them weep! Let them weep!

"They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-reaper,
And yon purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.'"

"My heart bleeds in sympathy for these poor, abused little ones," said Mrs. Ashton, "and I feel that something should be done to prevent such slavery of tender children."

"Yes," replied Mr. Ashton, "such things are a deep disgrace to that Christian nation, but, my dear, such conditions, and more, may be expected under the competitive system of business. These evils can never be abolished till the competitive

system is replaced by the co-operative. I have also some statistics relative to the labor situation in America. Not only are the children enslaved in the factories, but men are enslaved in the mines. There are hundreds of thousands of men who work like abject slaves deep below the surface of the earth, where they incur great risk to life and limb—who are paid an average wage of but $1.28 for each working day, or 79 cents for each day in the year. They live in rented shacks, for which they pay $6.00, an enforced fee of $6.00 for the company doctor, an enforced charge of $5.00 for oil, and $14 for powder used in mining, and buy their provisions at company stores where from five to one hundred per cent is added to the price of everything sold. The American financiers, Dun & Co., report for this year (1902) that the wages of miners were increased but ten per cent since 1897, while the cost of living increased thirty-four per cent.

"While this is the condition of the children of the poor and of the wage-workers in general, the millionaires and multi-millionaires continue to carry on their gigantic schemes of forming trusts, destroying weak competitors, and exploiting working people. I have before me, dear Lilly, the reports of the profits made last and this year by some of these American kings. The profits of one of the great oil companies was $60,000,000 a year, and the steel trust, on an investment of $25,000,000, reaped in eighteen months a profit of $30,000,000."

"The outlook is indeed discouraging," said Mrs. Ashton. "Is there any remedy for such evils?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Ashton, "the remedy is a

simple one, but the masses are slow to understand and apply it. This menace to the welfare of the people is happily attracting the attention of many fair-minded, kind-hearted men and women, in all the walks of life, and they are casting about for the proper methods to apply to put a stop to such monstrous wrongs, for they clearly see that violence, if not a bloody revolution, will ensue if matters are allowed to go on for a long time as they are now going. Many of the more intelligent working people are organizing themselves into labor unions, and hope in that way to better their condition, but at this time they have made but little progress. Their employers generally refuse to recognize such unions, and will hold no consultations with them. If the men of the mines or from the shops of the great trusts, go out on a strike, the employers cause the police and the soldiers to be called out and often they are driven back to work at the former wage, or are shot down.

"This condition of things, dear wife, grieves me deeply. Unless a remedy is found and applied within a few years, I fear America, as well as several of the European States, will be the scene of violence and much bloodshed. But there is a remedy. The problem, I repeat, is easy of solution."

"And what remedy for these industrial ills would you propose?" asked Mrs. Ashton.

"Why, Socialism, of course, my dear," rejoined Ashton. "The fundamental doctrine of Socialism is that no public utility or productive property should be owned and monopolized by private individuals, but should be owned and operated by the whole people collectively for the benefit of all.

Land, oil, coal, metals—all raw materials are valueless until labor is applied to them. Labor produces all wealth, and it is a violation of natural rights for the idle man, the non-producing man, to own and enjoy wealth that he has not earned, and the industrious producing man, to be deprived of the possession and enjoyment of what he has earned. In the collective commonwealth, or Socialistic state, nothing will be produced for profit for profit means that one man gets part or all another man earns, for nothing. The remedy for the industrial ills heretofore alluded to, is to 'reward every one according to his deeds.'

"The present competitive system is intrinsically a robber system. One class work and another class appropriate the benefit to their own use. Now the man who, by cunning and by speculation, and by monopoly, and by deception, and by taking advantage of his fellow—all of which he calls business—is the most successful in exploiting his fellow man and securing for himself the largest share of the earnings of others, is called the 'fittest,' while the laborer, the inventor, the man or woman who adds to the wealth of the world, is dubbed the unfittest. Socialism says, 'Down with greed, down with monopoly, down with injustice, down with slavery, down with idleness. Up with generosity, up with fair play, up with justice, up with freedom, up with honest industry, and let the nation's motto be, "Equal opportunities to all, special privileges to none." ' "

"Yes, my dear husband," said Mrs. Ashton, with enthusiasm, "I fully agree with the sentiments you have expressed, and, though a woman, I would be happy if I could do something that

would aid in bringing about the triumph of such a noble—such a holy cause. My heart bleeds in sympathy for the outraged children, and the poor landless, homeless men and women who have been robbed of the fruits of their labor, not only in America but in Australia, and in other countries called civilized. I have been asking myself, Am I entitled to the large fortune left me by my parents, not a dollar of which I have earned? I have added nothing to the wealth nor the wisdom nor the happiness of the world. I feel that in a true sense I am not the owner of this property. I have lands, and houses, and mortgages, and bonds and stocks. What service have I rendered for them? None whatever. By reason of laws enacted by men, these things are mine, but human laws are often unjust. According to strict justice they do not belong to me. My father was a good citizen, a kind husband and father, and he was recognized as an honest man, and a religious man, by those who believe in the competitive system. He and they thought any method of acquiring property that was not in violation of laws that men made, was an honest method. Now I know that nearly all of his great accumulations came to him through speculations, interest, rent, profits, and dividends on stocks which cost nothing except for the paper and printing. Having this knowledge, my quickened conscience says to me, that I must not appropriate this property, thus wrung from the people who created it, to my selfish personal uses. I am, therefore, willing, yes, anxious, to make use of these millions in such a way that mankind will be benefited and blessed. I cannot now refund it to the identical persons from whom

it was taken, but I have been thinking I might find a way in which to use it for the well-being of their children, or if not their children, then the descendants of others. Have you thougnt on this line, husband, and if so will you suggest some practical method for the accomplishment of the objects I have hinted at? Are you willing to second my efforts in that direction?"

"I have given the subject much earnest thought," replied Mr. Ashton, "and I am rejoiced to know that you have arrived at the conclusion you have. With all my heart I shall assist you in executing your plans."

Ashton arose from his seat, walked over to his wife, and dropping to one knee and placing his arm about her, and imprinting a kiss upon her lips, said: "My dear Lilly, I loved you from the day when I first say you, and now I both love and adore you with a deeper devotion than ever before."

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE GREAT WEALTH OF THE HIGSBEE ESTATE WAS MADE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE INAUGURATION OF THE FAMOUS CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH IN THE ISLAND OF ZANLAND, AND THE CAPITAL-LABOR PROBLEM SOLVED.—AMERICAN VISITORS DELIGHTED OVER WHAT THEY SAW IN THAT PROSPEROUS ISLAND.

A few days after the conversation mentioned in the preceding chapter had occurred, Mr. Ash-

ton invited his wife into the library room, and, after they were seated, said:

"Lilly, a short time ago you requested me to submit for your consideration a plan by which you might put to the uses of humanity your fortune. I have been pondering over your suggestion, and elaborating such a plan. I am now ready to submit it to you. I propose that we devote our lives and our fortunes to the work of establishing a Co-operative or Collective Commonwealth. That we may not do for a great nation, but I am sure we can on a small scale, and yet of sufficient magnitude to furnish a pattern which the people of a State, or an empire, might easily and profitably adopt. Your father left you large properties in the near-by island of Zanland, consisting of lands, mines, timber, railroad stocks, etc. The lands of this island are fertile; it is well-watered; contains coal, copper, iron, silver and gold mines, and oil. It has all the natural resources to support a large population. It already contains a population of one million of inhabitants, with large towns, some manufacturing, considerable agriculture, and two or three railroads. While the people are doing business under the competitive system, they are intelligent and progressive. Now I propose that we devote our fortune and our energies to the work of converting that little Republic into a Socialistic State. It will be no small undertaking. We will at first be misunderstood and often misrepresented; we will be called agitators and disturbers of the peace and quiet of the community, and some of the more ignorant as well as some who are wealthy from having exploited their fellows, will report that we are an-

archists. The aristocratic classes will ignore us; some of the clergy, who are Christians only in name, will preach against us, and the lawyers and courts will denounce us for disturbing vested rights. We will be called upon to exercise patience and practice forbearance. To a great extent we will have to become martyrs. Are we prepared to make all this sacrifice, my dear, to the end that we may bring great blessings to our fellowmen, especially to the generations yet unborn?"

"Yes, yes, my dear husband," responded Mrs. Ashton, "we are prepared. I have given the whole subject my most earnest thought. I have asked for divine assistance in arriving at a correct conclusion, and I am fully prepared to undertake the work. All the great souls of all the past were ostracized, persecuted, imprisoned or crucified for opposing old errors and endeavoring to bring new and better conditions to their kind, but they faltered not, and to-day the world, while enjoying the fruits of their great endeavors, also honors their memory, and they, themselves, are wearing crowns of glory in the land of exalted spirits. Let us not delay but enter upon our great work for humanity at once."

"Bravo! bravo! my dear little wife!" enthusiastically ejaculated Ashton. "We shall set about at once to carry out our plans."

On the following day Mr. and Mrs. Ashton held another conference on the subject, which now engrossed their entire time and attention. At this interview Ashton said:

"The first thing for us to do is for each of us to make a tour of Zanland and speak publicly to the people, and to interest as many others as pos-

sible to do likewise. In these addresses we shall show from statistics and otherwise the grievous defects of our present economic system, and the inconceivable advantage that would redound to the masses if they were to change it into a co-operative. The people must be educated. Proper literature must also be distributed among them. At the present time all the newspapers of the island, except a very few, are either owned or are subsidized by the trusts and other monopolists, and no assistance to our cause can be expected from them. In fact, we may expect their persistent ridicule and misrepresentation.

Here Mrs. Ashton interrupted by saying: "Would it not be a good idea, husband, for us to establish a printing office and issue daily, or weekly, a Socialist newspaper through which the truth might be told. The press is a great power for good or for evil."

"A capital idea," responded Ashton. "Yes, it is settled. We could expend several thousand dollars to no better purpose than to establish a printing plant at Centralia, the capital, and print and send out Socialist reading matter and a weekly journal. I most heartily second your suggestion, and that much of our programme is settled. It shall be done. Now our next effort should be to teach the people to change the form of government and turn it into a pure democracy, 'a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' To accomplish this is the first and most important practical step in the great work we contemplate. That accomplished, the foundation will be laid for an ideal government. The rapidity with which the remaining steps are taken will

depend on the intelligence of the people themselves. My conviction is, that with Direct Legislation established, the masses will soon inaugurate full Socialism. I sincerely hope so, and yet I would not urge them to go too fast. All the problems involved in the transition from the old to the new economic system, must be threshed out. Even with Direct Legislation in full force and effect, we may not fully anticipate all that the people may do. They must experiment. I have personally well-defined plans for the inauguration of Socialism, and shall work for their adoption, and hope for their acceptance, but no one may accurately predict just how, nor when, the full-fledged Collective Commonwealth may be established."

"Yes, I think you are correct in your conclusions," replied Mrs. Ashton, "but after we succeed in prevailing upon the people to adopt the Initiative and Referendum, what immediate next steps would you advise the people to take?"

"Next, as the land, and coal, and minerals, and oil, and water, and electricity are nature's raw materials," said Ashton, "and necessary for man's existence, and as they were not made by any act of man, it is obvious they should never be owned by private individuals. They of right—natural right—belong to all the people collectively. Therefore the people collectively should, by legal authority, assume ownership of them as well as of all other public necessities."

"Would the taking over of these public utilities be the exercise of some new power by the government?" asked Mrs. Ashton.

"No, not at all," replied Ashton. "The right

of the people, acting through established channels, to adopt such laws or regulations as the people may desire, is recognized now by every civilized country on earth. The people are supreme in matters of government. They can make and unmake all laws. Individual or private rights are inferior to the rights of the public. The taking over to the public lands, mines or any species of property owned by individuals is strictly in accordance to precedent long established. Now, on these fundamental principles, first, the establishment of a pure democracy; second, the collective ownership of public necessities, I propose we go to work to establish our Socialist State in the island of Zanland."

"I most heartily endorse your proposition," said Mrs. Ashton, "and let us begin immediately to carry out our plans."

Not twenty-four hours had passed before two earnest souls, fired by love for humanity, had mapped out their future course, and had taken several initiatory steps in furtherance of their plans. Mr. Batty, trusted friend and able lawyer, was called into counsel, and his services secured in formulating a system which was destined to become a great success—one that presented a practical solution of the economic problem of the ages, brought untold blessings to millions of human beings, and sent the names of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ashton and George Batty down the ages as public benefactors.

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Several years have passed since Mr. and Mrs. Ashton inaugurated their Socialistic movement in Zanland. Let us now review their work and

ascertain what measure of success they have attained. That they might be in close touch with their work they had, themselves, taken up their residence on the island.

The writer of this narrative, having read imperfect and fragmentary descriptions of the ideal government of Zanland, determined to visit the place in person, and personally acquaint himself with the people, their mode of living and of transacting business. In company with a friend of an inquiring mind, we left New York for Australia and proceeded to Zanland. We made the long journey in safety, and on our arrival at Centralia lost no time in calling on the Ashtons. We were met by a most cordial reception. After spending several days in traveling over the country, looking at the well-tilled farms, going down into the mines, visiting the manufactories, and the schools, and public libraries, and museums, the pleasure resorts and other interesting places, an appointment was made with the Ashtons for an interview, at which Mr. Ashton remarked he would take great pleasure in answering all interrogatories relating to the inauguration and practical working of the economic system which had been crowned by such satisfactory results. The writer and his friend, Rev. Benjamin M. Fay, called at the Ashton home promptly at the appointed time for the meeting, and were warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Ashton and invited into the library room, where we met for the first time Mr. George Batty, ex-attorney, now the associate of and co-worker with the Ashtons.

After the usual greetings had been exchanged

and some pleasant general conversation was indulged in, Mr. Ashton said:

"Well, gentlemen, I understand you have come all the way from the United States to investigate affairs in Zanland. What is it you most desire to know about us here on this island?"

"We have," said the editor, "heard much about your form of government and your economic system. We have heard it most highly commended, and on the other hand have heard it condemned. If it is your pleasure to inform us, we would be greatly gratified if you would give us a history of your work here, how you started your Collective Commonwealth, and what are the results. This we desire for our own personal satisfaction and also for the purpose of acquainting the American people through the press on our return, with a correct history of your movement."

"With the greatest of pleasure," replied Ashton, "shall I respond to your request, so far as I am able, assisted by my wife and Mr. Batty, who deserve as much or more credit than is due me for the great work that has been accomplished here.

"To begin with," continued Ashton, "we began our work by agitation, by educating the people to understand that it would be to their best interests and the interests of future generations to establish a pure democratic form of government. When that was accomplished then all the other good things followed. In all the republican, or representative governments, the so-called public servants are really not the servants of the people who elected them, but they are their rulers and can defy the people until their official term ex-

pires. When men get into the law-making bodies they are too often influenced by lobbies to vote for measures the people do not want, and refuse to pass laws which the people do want; therefore, all our first efforts were directed to bringing about a partial abolition of a representative government and the establishment in its stead of a democracy, under which the people directly make and unmake the laws. This movement we called the Initiative and Referendum. Simultaneously with this demand we also advocated the Imperative Mandate."

"Will you be so kind as to explain quite fully those terms?" asked Rev. Fay.

"Certainly," replied Ashton. "I can best do so, perhaps, by giving you our mode of procedure now, since we have the Initiative and Referendum in good working condition:

"We have a legislative body consisting of but one branch, which we have named the General Assembly. There is no Senate. Delegates to the Assembly are elected for a term of two years. Laws enacted by this Legislature are valid and binding unless disapproved of by a majority of the people. We have a President, but he can veto no bills passed. The people alone exercise the veto power. When eight per cent of the people of either sex over twenty-one years of age are dissatisfied with any legislative enactment, they can, by petition, require such law to be submitted to the voters for ratification or rejection by a majority of voters at the polls. Eight per cent of all the voters can also cause any proposed law they may desire to be submitted to the people, whether first enacted or not by the Assembly. All import-

ant laws are thus passed upon by the people themselves. Now, this we call the Initiative and Referendum, and you may readily see that this inevitably put an end to the work of lobbies and corrupt men in the legislative bodies."

"That strikes me very favorably," said Mr. Fay, "but what is the Imperative Mandate."

"The Imperative Mandate is our method for calling upon any public officer to step down and out before his term has expired, if he proves false to his trust," said Ashton. "Any public servant, be he president, legislator, judge, or any other office-holder, can thus be called home at any time by a majority vote of the people. This power exercised when occasion requires it to be applied, keeps all our officials true to the best interests of the people. Right here let me add, gentlemen, that our theory was from the first that, if we could establish Direct Legislation and the Right of Recall, that the foundation of an ideal Commonwealth would be laid broad, and deep, and permament, and all other desirable things would naturally and easily follow in due time, for then all political power would be not in representatives of the people but in the hands of all the people themselves."

Mrs. Ashton here signified a desire to speak, when her husband said: "Speak, my dear, perhaps I may be omitting to mention something important at this point."

"It occurred to me," said Mrs. Ashton, "that the gentlemen might be interested in knowing that among the first important steps taken after the people of Zanland became enthused by a progressive spirit, was to enfranchise women, and place

them on a civil and political equality with the male sex."

"Yes," responded Ashton, "I might have forgotten to mention that, and yet I would have been very stupid had I not remembered it, and accorded great credit to such action. I very much doubt if our movement to establish the Commonwealth would have been successful had the right to vote and hold any office in the gift of the people been withheld from women. In fact, I feel quite persuaded that it would have been a dismal failure."

"Did you not encounter much and fierce opposition to such innovations on old and revered customs as Direct Legislation and Equal Suffrage were?" asked Mr. Fay.

"Yes, decidedly so," said Ashton. "The first steps were not taken until after a long and bitter contest, as the capitalists generally opposed the movement and freely predicted its ignominious failure if established. For some time they, by sophistry and dismal prophesies, kept the votes of the farmers and wage-workers divided between the Republican and Democrat parties, but the toilers finally came to understand that they could not improve their condition in that way, so they withdrew from the old parties and went over to the Socialists. By uniting their votes they had a majority and were thus enabled to enact just such laws as they desired. This having been accomplished, the good things which we now enjoy came along in quick succession."

"After the Socialists gained a majority of votes what important changes did they first inaugurate?" asked the editor.

"The first radical movement they made," an-

swered Ashton, "after the adoption of Direct Legislation and the Right of Recall, was to Socialize the land and the more important public utilities. A law was enacted which provided for the taking over to the State all lands not improved or occupied, without any compensation to their so-called private owners. The Commonwealth also assumed ownership of all improved and occupied lands, including railway and steamship lines. The people caused an appraisement of the value of the improvements to be made and compensated the owners of the same to the amount of the appraisement, issuing to them 'Commonwealth Due Bills," which bear no interest, redeemable at the option of the State in from five to twenty years in gold or silver bullion, coal, iron, farm products, or any other commodity produced collectively in the island. Under this law no one is ejected from his home, but he is given the right to occupy the place so long as he may desire, but he cannot sell the premises nor transmit them to heirs by will. If he should voluntarily remove from the place, he loses his right to again occupy it without permission from the State through the proper officials. This wrought no hardship because he can move into any other place that may be vacant. Residents may also exchange their places of residence, each with the other, when they so mutually agree."

"I can see how the less important properties might be easily managed," said Mr. Fay, "but did you not find it much more difficult to take over the railroads and transportation lines?"

"No," said Ashton, "those properties were also acquired by the State without trouble. Upon in-

vestigation we found that 'The Zanland Island Railroad' had cost originally its private owners but three millions of dollars, but they had watered the stock to an equal amount and represented to the public that it had cost six millions; they were charging the public for the carrying of freight and passengers an exorbitant rate—so large that they were enabled to make enormous dividends annually, which went into the pockets of the men who held these fictitious stocks. They had patterned after the United States where the total cost of all the railroads was six billions of dollars, but they had been stocked at twelve billions. The president of the Island Railroad received a salary of $40,000 per year, and the other officers were paid in proportion, while the daily laborers got but 90 cents to $1.50 per day. These facts were laid before the people and they said:

" 'The railroads are a public necessity. They ought not to be owned privately. Once wagon roads and turnpikes were private property, and the owners put up toll-gates and collected money from every one who traveled on those roads. Then, as public necessity required their converting to public uses, the public took them. We should do likewise with the railroads. The private owners of these roads have no right to monopolize machinery and the power of steam and deprive the masses of the advantage of the discovery of nature's forces, and deceive the people as to the cost of the property and charge exorbitant prices for their services, and force their employes to work at starvation wages. The farmers especially complained that a few railway magnates not only overcharged them for carrying

their goods to market, but compelled them to pay excessive prices for coal and iron and manufactured goods, which they had to buy. A law was therefore enacted directing that all railway and steamship properties be duly appraised at their actual value, exclusive of the value of the land occupied, the private owners paid the appraisement price and the property turned over to the State to be operated under State supervision."

"What became of the thousands of employes?" asked Mr. Fay.

"Why, they kept right on at work, of course," said Ashton, "just as they would have done if one private company had purchased the road of another company. They were now working for the State instead of a private corporation, and their hours of service per day were less, while their wages were much more."

"You spoke, Mr. Ashton, of the farmers being especially dissatisfied with the treatment accorded their class by the railroads and trusts," said Mr. Fay. "Now, I am aware that the monopolists increased the cost of living of the wage-workers without materially raising their wages, but I do not so clearly see how the farmer was seriously damaged by them. Will you please to make that plain?"

"Most assuredly," replied Ashton. "The farmers and mechanics have no trust or monopoly. In your country they sell in a competitive market and buy in large part in a monopoly market. That is, they sell low and buy high, and the wider and stronger the grasp of monopoly upon the industries, the lower, relatively, the farmer and laborer will sell, and the higher, relatively, the

prices at which they must buy. Wealth goes from the farmer in corn, cotton, wheat, etc., and equal wealth does not come back simply because the monopolist's profit is many times bigger than the farmer's profit. For example, barbed wire went up 150 per cent, while cereals fell 15 per cent from 1898 to 1900—that is, for each 100 pounds of barbed wire the wire trust takes three times as many bushels of grain from the farmer as was required three years ago, or for the same quantity of grain the farmer gets only one-third as many pounds of barbed wire as in 1898.

"The wealth coming to the farmer in return for the wealth that goes from him is growing less and less in the United States. The trusts are rapidly increasing in number and power, the farmer is paying more and more tribute to these kings of commerce every year. The great cities where the monopolists live are growing relatively richer month by month, and the country districts poorer. The Gulf stream sets from the farmer to the counting-room of the monopolists. The trusts are absorbing the wealth of the country.

"If the Nation's income is twenty-five billions a year, and the trusts and monopolies take five billions more than their goods or services are entitled to, there are five billions less than there ought to be to go to the farmers, the merchants and laboring men. And as trusts extend their power the tribute paid to them becomes greater and greater.

"This the farmers of Zanland finally came to understand and they in company with the wage workers and mechanics joined the Socialists and were the main factors in establishing the Co-op-

erative Commonwealth." Here the editor interrupted by saying:

"You spoke, Mr. Ashton, of paying the private owners of the railroads and steamship lines the appraisement price. Will you kindly explain in what did you pay them. I understand you coin no metal money in the island. Did the state issue bonds?"

"The Commonwealth issued 'promises to pay,' which for the sake of convenience might be called bonds," replied Ashton. "These notes bore no interest, and were redeemable in from five to twenty years at the option of the state, in gold or silver bullion, wheat, corn, cotton or any product of the Collective Commonwealth. The state reserved the right to redeem all or only a part of these bonds in the manner and time mentioned, such right to be enforced if at any time it should appear that owing to any national calamity, such as shortness of crops, or other misfortunes, of great magnitude, the interests of the people demanded such manner of liquidation. This right to thus withhold payment, is based on the principle that the interests and well-being of all the people are greater than the interests of the few."

"Are there not some elements of repudiation in that method, Mr. Ashton?" asked Mr. Fay.

"No. Our action could not be construed as repudiation," replied Ashton, "for the state will redeem all its obligations—not in what Europe and America call money—but in the products of our Collective Commonwealth. The reservation to which you perhaps allude, is to be insisted upon only in case of national emergency. The right to exercise such power has long been recognized

by the governments of the world and has been exercised by them in great and exceptional emergencies."

"Did not the incurring of such large indebtedness seriously embarrass you?" asked the editor.

"Not in the least," answered Ashton. "As the government appraisers squeezed out $1,500,000 of watered stocks, and appraised the value of the railway properties at the cost of the material and labor used in their construction, excluding the value of the land which always did of natural right belong to all the people, the amount remaining for the state to pay was very moderate. It was found after the state had operated the railroads two years, that the people were saved a sum several thousands of dollars in excess of the amount of bonds given its private owners for the property. It was at first suggested by some that the state refuse to purchase the Island railroads and to construct new government lines. Those favoring that argued that by so doing the state would have better machinery and rolling stock and more modern equipments. There were many good features in that proposition but a majority thought best to take over the lines already constructed. The private owners of the railroads and the steamship lines were greatly alarmed at the proposition that the people might build their own roads and their own ships, for they well knew that if that were done, freight and passengers would be carried at cost of service and they would be speedily bankrupted; they therefore implored the people to buy their property at any price the people might be willing to pay, and to compensate them for the same in

whatever the Commonwealth might deem proper. And I might here add that the telegraph and telephone systems, the water and lighting plants and many other public utilities became the property of the people collectively in the same way. In every instance the private owners were extremely anxious to dispose of their plants to the state. Not one of them was ignorant of the fact that if the Commonwealth established new plants and served the people at cost, that their business and their properties would be worthless."

Here Mr. Batty suggested that the visitors might be interested in hearing a short history of the work of the Oil Company and how the people dealt with that gigantic monopoly.

"Well," responded Ashton, "it was discovered by the pioneer builders of our Collective Commonwealth that a very wealthy and powerful oil company of America, had, several years previously, sent their agents to Zanland and acquired private ownership of all the rich oil lands of the island. After getting well fortified they systematically destroyed all the smaller companies, then they advanced the price of refined oils to 20 cents per gallon while it cost them but about two cents per gallon to produce it. Not confining themselves to monopolizing oil alone, they bought up the coal mines, the copper and iron mines, and secured a controlling interest in the island railroad lines. They employed shrewd men to manipulate political parties, attend caucuses, secure the election of judges, legislators, and others to official positions who would do their bidding, and through their great newspapers

which they had established at Centralia and in the larger towns, they adroitly fostered the idea that the island should maintain a standing army. This they did that their employes to whom they paid but from 75 cents to $1.50 per day for their labor might be shot into submission if they became discontented with their lot and attempted to better their condition by striking for increased wages and shorter day's service. The working men formed Labor Unions, and for a time held up the wages, but the capitalists managed to keep them from uniting at the ballot box, and so all the laws desired by the monopolists were enacted, and the courts and army were under their control. By court injunctions, policemen's clubs and the rifle and bayonets of the soldiers, the workers were kept in subjection. Conditions for the working people became so bad that parents were compelled to put their tender children into the mines and the workshops and factories, and the combined wages of the entire family were barely sufficient to procure the commonest necessities of life. Ignorance, intoxication, insanity, and crime grew out of such enforced condition of the workers. The profits of this great oil company which had spread itself to all parts of the island, were more than sixty millions of dollars per year. The stockholders toiled not; they rendered no services to the public yet they became possessed of inconceivable wealth, not one dollar of which they honestly earned; they lived in palaces; they owned yachts; they blazed with diamonds and gorgeous apparel; they reveled in such luxury as would eclipse the extravagance of the ancient kings of Babylon. All about them

they saw, unmoved by pity, tender children forced to work like slaves, and men, women and children compelled to live in poverty, squalor and wretchedness because of insufficient compensation allowed them for their labor, and yet in their stately mansions and in their private palace cars they had gorgeous apartments for cats and dogs. They spurned with contempt and with cruel scorn the hungry, homeless and sick tramp from their back door, while they contributed largely to the missionary fund of their church and they shed tears at the thought that the heathen of foreign lands would be eternally damned unless the gospel was sent to them. They hated the Labor Unions and the Socialists with an intensity that cannot be expressed in words, who they said, were disturbing the existing admirable order of things. They invoked the courts for injunctions and called on the authorities for bayonets and bullets to protect their property. The life and liberty of the toilers, and the slavery of the children of the poor in mines and factories, were matters of insignificance to them, but the sacredness of their property, acquired by watered stocks and by exploiting other people, was a consideration of supreme importance.

"The people of Zanland saw all this and they said:

" 'This is not right. Infinite wisdom placed the oil and the coal and the minerals in the earth for the benefit of all the people, and not to be owned by a few. We will do these crafty exploiters no harm. They are the victims of an old but a false—a pernicious—system of economics—a system that has its roots in greed, that came

down to us from a cruel tyrannical age, when slavery was thought to be a divine institution. Once all prisoners taken in war, if not murdered, were made the slaves of their captors. Once it was thought right for a few to own and to buy and sell their fellowmen. But evolution has been at work and now those practices are condemned. But even yet the belief is quite prevalent that a few shrewd millionaires may own the labor of their fellowmen and the land, the coal, the oil, the metals, the electricity, the machines—in short all of Nature's forces which properly and by natural right belong to all the people collectively—that are in fact essential to their well-being to own; but happily that belief is rapidly giving away also.' The people of Zanland said:

"'These millionaire monopolists are not personally bad men. Many of them are kind men and so were the slave owners in America who bought and sold men, women and children. They are, however, greedy men and their minds have not yet been illuminated by the light which the law of evolution is bringing to the world. They still think they should individually own nature's resources and the labor of others, and compel the workers to support them in luxury as the king once required his slaves to do, but we will teach them a better way. To utterly repudiate their claim to the ownership of public utilities and to the labor of their fellowmen would be morally right, but we will be generous. We will pay them a reasonable price, sufficient to cover the cost of development of the mines exclusive of the value of the undisturbed ore, or coal, or oil in them,

and take over to the Commonwealth all these things and operate them in the interest of all the people.' They did so, and the people soon saved enough by reason of the change to pay the full amount they cost, and even the monopolists finally admitted that the change was a good one."

"I think perhaps," continued Ashton, "that the greatest glory of Zanland is our school system. As Mrs. Ashton was largely instrumental in formulating the system, and is entitled to much credit for so presenting it to the public through our publications, that they readily adopted it, I will ask her to present to you the chief features of our educational system."

"I deserve no more credit than yourself, or Mr. Batty, for what has been accomplished," responded Mrs. Ashton, "but I have no objection to speaking to our friends regarding the schools, for that is a subject I am deeply interested in. My thought was that the proper education of the children is the most important work I or any one else can engage in. After the employment of children in factories, and mines, and workshops was forbidden, and the compulsory educational law was enacted, the next thing to be done was to build the proper number of school houses and colleges in every part of the island. Every child between the ages of six and twenty-one is required to attend school. In these schools and colleges is taught all that the students are instructed in in the schools of Europe or America, and much more. Polytechnic departments, in which a knowledge of cooking, garment making, carpentering, and in fact every industry carried on in the island is taught, were incorporated in the schools,

There are also musical, art, and physical culture departments. Every student is not only given a theoretical but a practical education. He has special training in that line of work to which he seems best adapted. Not only does the state provide the instruction but also the books, and when necessary the student's clothing, board and lodging. It affords me great pleasure, gentlemen, to say that our school system is a decided success. You should visit our schools and see for yourselves the grand work that is being done by them. And now I will ask you to excuse my absence during the remainder of the day as I wish to attend a woman's meeting at one of our public halls where social and industrial questions are to be discussed. It might interest you to know that since equal suffrage and the Collective Commonwealth was established here, that the women have become, as a class, much more intelligent, healthy and happy. Before Socialism was established here when women were deprived of their right to vote and matrimony was the supreme object of every girl, a majority of them made it their chief study to try to look handsome. With an erroneous idea of what a sensible man admires, they attempted to make themselves resemble the pictures of the fashionable women of the popular magazines. They pinched up their feet in shoes much too small and made with ridiculously high and slender heels; they wore hats of indescribable shapes and enormous size; their dresses were so long that they either dragged on the ground or had to be held up in a hideous fashion when they walked, but infinitely worse than all was the death-pro-

ducing corset with which they made themselves take on the shape of the wasp. It required some time in which to convince them of the highly injurious effects of compressing their waists which results in the displacing of internal organs and the consequent sowing of seeds of physical disease and death, and unfitting themselves to become happy wives and mothers. But after persistent effort they were induced to abandon the murderous and silly practice of tight lacing. Already a great improvement is observed in their health. The girl with a lovely shape as nature intended, is not only healthier and happier, but much prettier than the wasp-waisted variety. When our young ladies came to understand also that the fashion plates do not correctly represent men's idea of beauty—that in fact no sensible man admires a too slender female waist, then it was not difficult to induce them to let out the corset laces. The publication of fashion magazines such as abound in Europe and America, which have cursed womankind and mankind also beyond all estimate, is not encouraged in Zanland. We believe in beauty, and in artistic dressing, but we insist that the dress shall not crucify the wearer and unfit her to become a healthy, happy wife and mother. Our girls who marry become healthy, cheerful wives, and their children are well born and divorces are very rare. Under the old system, the young man who married the fashionable girl usually had also to provide his wife, from the first, with a servant, for the physical constitution of the young wife had been hopelessly wrecked. Weak, peevish, internal organs displaced—a nervous wreck—made anything but

a happy home. Children, if born at all, died young, or grew up with delicate constitutions; the wife faded early; disappointment and unhappiness crept into the home, and neglect, unfaithfulness and divorce followed. One of the best results of the establishment of the Collective Commonwealth and of equal suffrage is the effect upon women. Their sphere was enlarged and they have proven themselves worthy to be entrusted with their new powers and wider opportunities."

Mrs. Ashton was about to bow herself out when Mr. Batty said:

"I wish to add my testimony in corroboration of what Mrs. Ashton has said, relative to the improvement in womankind, since the Collective Commonwealth was established. I have been a bachelor many years and would have remained a bachelor for life if our girls had continued on in their old ways, but now, since they have turned over a new leaf and are storing their minds with useful knowledge, and are exhibiting their good sense in matters of dress, and are growing healthy and more beautiful from having abandoned the cruel and murderous corset-squeezing, I am half inclined to withdraw from the Bachelor's Club, and seek one of Zanland's fair daughters and ask her to share in my joys and sorrows for life. But now I interrupted the conversation for the purpose of suggesting to Mrs. Ashton before she leaves us, to devote a few minutes more to a brief description of our maternity hospitals which are largely the result of the efforts of the ladies of Zanland."

"Our maternity hospitals," said Mrs. Ashton,

"are temporary homes where expectant mothers may go and remain a few months. Here they are relieved from all care and anxiety. They have access to a library well supplied with books, magazines and other publications, from various parts of the world. Here they have music and games, and all varieties of innocent amusements. Lectures are delivered twice each week on heredity, environments, and ante-natal influences, physical culture, proper diet, right thinking, and the right of children to be well born. The walls of these hospitals are adorned by fine paintings; fountains play in the lawns and gardens; birds sing in the trees in the near by parks, and happiness and cheerfulness pervade the place. The best of physicians and nurses are in constant attendance. No woman is required to become an inmate of the maternity hospitals but ninety per cent of prospective mothers are found there. Some prefer to remain at home awaiting the supreme event, and those who do so are given an extra allowance and skilled nurses are provided for them. Nothing perhaps in our Commonwealth is more popular nor so productive of good as these hospitals. They are proving to the world that all children are not born totally depraved as was once taught. On the contrary the results show that if the expectant mothers are surrounded by proper environments, and are relieved of all annoyances and fear of poverty, and are exempted from hard toil, and are placed where they hear good music, can read good books, and see beautiful sights, that their children come into the world endowed with robust constitutions, cheerful, happy dispositions and bright minds. It is my

solemn conviction that the old countries where the masses are still in deep poverty and the expectant mothers are often treated with less consideration than is given the female animals, will continue to be cursed by illy born offspring, and that drunkenness, licentiousness, venality and crime will go on undiminished. I hope, gentlemen, that when you return to America that you will do what you can to influence your people to think earnestly on this subject. If your country should adopt but a single feature of our institutions of Zanland, and it were left to me to designate and recommend that one, I would say establish and maintain at public expense, maternity hospitals in every county in America. One of your distinguished educators and thinkers once said: 'The time to begin educating children is before they are born.' "

So saying Mrs. Ashton bid a temporary farewell to the party and withdrew, Mr. Ashton accompanying her to the automobile, remarking as he did so:

"Gentlemen, I ask you to excuse me also for a brief period. Mr. Batty will, I doubt not, take pleasure in responding to any inquiry you may make touching our affairs in Zanland."

"With the greatest of pleasure," said Mr. Batty,

"Well, then," said the editor, "will you kindly explain to us your custom or law governing wages or the compensation to the individual for services rendered to the state?"

"All business of a public nature," said Batty, "is conducted by the administrative power of the Commonwealth. It was found that where a just system of production and distribution is main-

tained, under which every one who renders useful service receives the full benefit of his labor (no one individual making a profit from the labor of his fellow), that every thing necessary for the comfort of every member of the Commonwealth, could be produced by the service of able-bodied adults between the ages of twenty-one and fifty, by working from four to six hours per day. A law was therefore enacted exempting from labor, minors, and all men and women who had attained to the age of fifty years. All in excess of that age were placed on the retired list and provided for. The sick, and those physically or mentally incapacitated, were taken care of in the homes for the aged. One of our mottoes is, 'One for all and all for one,' hence every able-bodied adult between the ages named render service to the state, be they ministers, physicians, teachers, artists, musicians, clerks, bookkeepers or manual laborers."

At this point Mr. Fay said:

"I think I have heard that you do not use money in the island. If that is correct how do yau pay the wages of those who render public services?"

"We do not use metal money in Zanland," replied Mr. Batty. "I will now explain that important part of our system and I ask you to be patient with me for this feature of our government is somewhat complicated and ought not to be too briefly stated.

"First, then, the island is divided into many departments and sub-departments, the size varying according to the population. Each department has one common store house or depository

located at a point most convenient and accessible to the residents of such department. At the head of these departments is a competent superintendent with a proper number of assistants. The products of the respective departments are stored in the general or central depositories, or in the sub-depositories, as the convenience of the people indicates. This is called the Produce Department.

"The same territory also constitutes a Service Department which is presided over by a superintendent who is assisted by foremen of all the different lines of industry. At the end of each week Certificates of Service which are designated 'Time Checks,' are given to each person rendering service in the district. These certificates show the number of hours the holder has served the Commonwealth during the week. With these time checks, which are issued in denominations representing full days or fractions of days of service, the holder can purchase at the department store any article that his necessities or fancy may prompt him to desire. They can also be applied in payment of transportation over the railway or steamship lines. As the department stores, or depositories, contain an assortment of everything that industry produces all the citizens' wants may thus be easily supplied."

"But," said Mr. Fay, "what will prevent a John D. Morgan or a Pierpont Rockefeller from exploiting the industrious citizen by buying up all or a large part of the outstanding time checks?"

"Nothing could be gained by such an exploit," said Mr. Batty, "even if it were possible to do

it. First, because money as used in Europe and America is not employed here in any business transaction. Second, the checks are redeemable in nothing but goods, and an excess of certificates above what the monopolist could exchange for something he could eat, wear or use, would be of no value to him whatever. Moreover, the original certificate holder would not care to exchange his certificate for foreign money because it would be of slight value to him unless he wished to travel abroad. As interest, rent and profit, are eliminated from our system, the schemer would gain nothing by cornering our medium of exchange. Being paper our money is devoid of intrinsic value."

"In the event," said the editor, "there are able-bodied men between the ages of twenty-one and fifty, who refuse to render any service to the Collective Commonwealth, and become mendicants or tramps from choice, how do you deal with them?"

"It is a law of the island," replied Batty, "that he who will not work shall not eat. 'Every one according to his deeds,' is our motto. The business of the country as has already been stated, is transacted on the Socialist plan. All the things produced and used can be procured only from the department stores. Nothing is sold for money. Everything that goes from the store, goes out because a service certificate comes in. He who does no service gets no certificate, and he who has no certificate can get no goods. Under an industrial system, like ours, where from four to six hours' service per day will secure all the comforts and luxuries of life, but few will be found

who will refuse to cheerfully perform their share of service; but we have a remedy for mendicants and vagrants who are such from choice. Every citizen of the Commonwealth knows that there is not the shadow of an excuse for begging, because the opportunity to work is open to all, hence no one gives to the mendicant. They well know as he knows, that if he is able-bodied, the state offers him employment on the same terms it gives employment to every other citizen, and if he is physically or mentally incapacitated, the hospital doors stand open for him. We have jails and confinement for the incorrigible mendicant, as well as prisons and punishment for all others who violate our laws, but our jails in Zanland are nearly empty and our criminals are so rare that they are a curiosity."

"I would like to enquire," said the editor, "how your labor is carried on; that is, do workers in the fields, or mines, or sewers, work the same number of hours and receive the same compensation as the teachers, or doctors, or others engaged in indoor work?"

"The labor of the Commonwealth," said Batty, "is divided into three departments or classes, to-wit, A., B. and C.

"A day's service in the 'A' department, is four hours, and is of that class which is very arduous, involving extra hazard to life and limb, or health. In this class are the laborers in coal and metal mines, firemen and engineers, brakemen, switchmen, toilers in steel works, in sewers and other places where there is imminent danger from accidents, poisonous gases and explosives.

"In the 'B' department, artists, skilled mechan-

ics, officers, musicians, teachers, ministers, physicians, foremen, clerks, bookkeepers, and others who fill places of responsibility requiring technical skill, executive ability, etc., five hours constitute a day's service.

"All others not classified in 'A' or 'B' are considered to be in class 'C,' and their service is six hours per day.

"The wage or compensation of each worker, in the three classes, for a day's service is the same; that is, a worker in class 'A' who labors four hours receives a certificate of equal purchasing power as the worker receives in class 'B' who labors five hours, while those in class 'C' receive for their day's service of six hours, a check of equal purchasing power as those in either of the other classes.

"No worker is compelled to cease labor in any class after he has performed his day's service, but he has the right to work longer than the four, five, or six hours per day, if he so desires, receiving for such excess over a standard day's service, time checks at the same ratio of compensation as may be paid in his class. Thus the very industrious, faithful man, may earn more than the slothful, and with his larger earnings can purchase more of those things he may desire for private use, or travel more on the public railways or steamboat lines. Even under Socialism, the industrious worker will have a finer home, more musical instruments, a greater library, a better automobile, a more spirited team of horses, more elegant clothing—in short more non-productive property of every kind than the improvident and lazy man."

"May I enquire," asked the editor, "by what method you classify the people in these three classes?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Batty. "Registration books are opened in each service department on the first day of December of each year, and remain open one month. All adult citizens are called upon to appear personally and register his or her name in such books, stating their name, age, sex, and place of residence, and indicating the class in which they desire to work during the ensuing year. They thus classify themselves, but for good cause shown, the classification may be altered or modified by the Boards of Classification. These boards, consisting of five citizens of the respective departments, are chosen by the people of the district at a general election and they have the power to modify or correct such classification when necessary. Any citizen has the right to appeal from their decision to a central and higher Board of Classification.

"In addition to the three classes named, we have a special or honorary class. None are assigned to this class nor can they register themselves as belonging to it. Entrance to the honorary class can be gained in but one way. If a citizen has distinguished himself by great and exceptional proficiency as a surgeon, or artist, or teacher, or musician, or inventor, or scholar, or public benefactor, or in any calling, he may be promoted out of the other classes by a majority vote of the people at a special election called for that purpose. His name must first be proposed for such distinction by the General Assembly. Members of the honorary class receive no extra

compensation, but shall be compensated for their services of whatever kind, by time checks at a like rate as are those of class A."

"Is not your system somewhat arbitrary," asked Mr. Fay.

"No," replied Mr. Batty, "not at all. You are aware that no government nor large enterprise of any kind can be carried on without some orderly, well defined system of procedure. In the United States, and in the European States, the law requires persons to submit to rigid examinations before they are employed as teachers in the schools, or in the postal or any other department of the government. If this were not so no government nor large enterprise of any sort could succeed. As to the classification of workers, that is easily accomplished and has proven very satisfactory in the island. The great masses of our people are registered in class 'C.' There are two good reasons for that: The first is that most men would prefer to work six hours per day where the labor is not hard and there is little or no risk to health, or life, or limb, than to go into class 'A' and labor four hours underground or where the work is harder, and yet there are sufficient numbers in class 'A' to carry on all the labor necessary to be done in that class. The second reason why the greater number of our people are in class 'C' is, that not being skilled mechanics, nor possessing the necessary education and qualification to become physicians, teachers, inventors, artists, or managers, they prefer to labor in class 'C.' Probably the greater number will be found in class 'C' for generations of time. If any citizen, after the work of registration has

been completed, desires to change to another class, he may apply to the Board of Examiners which holds a meeting to investigate such matters on the first Monday of each month, and if he can show cause for such change, it will be so ordered by the board. If a worker's services at any time prove unsatisfactory in the class in which he is employed he may, by the superintendent of that class, be changed to another class, and if such action is unsatisfactory to the worker, he can appeal his case to the Board of Examiners, and if he is not satisfied with their decision, he has the right to carry his appeal up to the Assembly, and if that body decides contrary to what he may desire, he can avail himself of the right of the Referendum and take his case before the people at the polls. This is his court of last resort. It must be remembered that our government is a pure democracy; the people are supreme in all matters pertaining to the affairs of the Commonwealth. Our present system was not established without many experiments in many things. I would not contend that it is perfect yet. When the people perceive wherein an improvement can be made they make it."

At this moment Mr. Ashton again joined the company when Mr. Batty asked to be excused for the remainder of the day, as he wished to attend a lecture to be delivered at one of the public halls, by Prof. Holmes of the State University. As he arose to depart he said:

"Gentlemen, I again turn you over to Mr. Ashton, who, I know, will take great delight in further enlightening you as to the practical workings of our Co-Operative Commonwealth.

No man is better qualified to impart that information than Mr. Ashton, to whom more than any other, is due the credit of formulating our admirable system of economics and putting it into successful operation."

"You do me too much honor," modestly answered Ashton. "You forget, Mr. Batty, the inestimable advantage your counsel, and that of Mrs. Ashton, has been to all concerned in the work to which you allude. However, gentlemen, I am again at your service."

"It has occurred to me," said Mr. Fay, "that perhaps your system may be somewhat complicated and difficult in application. Have you found it so?"

"No; quite the contrary," replied Mr. Ashton. "We have a National president and various administrative departments with a cabinet officer at the head of each, who, with his corps of assistants, conduct the business of the respective departments in an orderly, methodical manner. In the United States you have a Secretary of State, Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Interior, a Postmaster General, and other cabinet officers. They have scores of thousands of assistants, and the business of eighty millions of people is thus managed with little confusion. In Zanland we have also cabinet officers corresponding to nearly all you have in America, but we have some additional ones, such as Secretary of Production, Secretary of Distribution and Secretary of Transportation. These three latter are our most important cabinet officers, and the business of each is conducted in a highly satisfactory manner. All public servants

holding important positions of trust and responsibility, you will remember, are elected by the people, but can be recalled at any time as heretofore explained, if they prove incompetent or untrustworthy."

Here the editor interposed to ask:

"I understand that in your Commonwealth all productive property is owned collectively, and non-productive property may be owned privately. Now, I wish to ask if any class of property can be transmitted to heirs by will or inheritance?"

"No property," said Ashton, "can be transmitted by will or the laws of inheritance, except that which is of a purely private and of a non-productive nature, such as paintings, musical instruments, books, yachts, automobiles, house furnishings, wearing apparel and such other property that cannot be put to public uses, and made to produce other property. I will venture to repeat what I think I have stated before, that only that class of property which shows by its nature that it is of a productive sort, and can be used collectively, is so owned, while that which, from its nature, shows it is adapted to private uses only, and cannot be put to general public use, is owned privately. And here let me say, gentlemen, that we have found that the more we extend the public use of things, the wealthier do the individuals and families become in the possession of private property. Under the competitive system, the few became enormously wealthy while the many had but little. Our system levels down the millionaire and levels up the masses. As the workers get the full benefit of their labor, the more private property and luxuries can they have

in their homes. Under our system the workers have better houses, more and better clothing, more books, finer musical instruments and pictures; they have automobiles and private yachts, and carriages, and spirited horses, and have more leisure and can travel more. I think you will admit, gentlemen, that the desire or ambition of an abject slave for property and the things secured by property, is crushed out, and in time he is forced into degradation and ignorance and that a contentment with his condition follows. With the accumulation of property, comes hope and education, and intelligence, and aspiration. Socialism levels up the masses. It gives to them vastly more personal property than they can possibly acquire under the old system, or rather they possess the things they have worked for, instead of those things being possessed by the crafty few who have really earned little."

"In Europe and America," said Mr. Fay, the saloon is a curse. How do you manage the liquor business here?"

"Quite easily and satisfactorily," answered Mr. Ashton. "In the old countries where the competitive system of business is still adhered to, and there is such an insane struggle to get money, saloons spring up like mushrooms. There are large profits in the business and the inducement is very strong for men to engage in that occupation, for every man knows that in those countries, a man without money might nearly as well be in prison or the grave; they know money is hard to get by day's labor, while the trusts have made it a herculean task for the business man, of small capital, to succeed; hence thousands of men

engage in the saloon business who would prefer some other if it insured a livelihood. Now in Zanland, there is no excuse for engaging in that calling; indeed there is no inducement whatever to open a saloon. We do not restrict the citizen's liberty to eat or drink what he wants, but all profit is eliminated from the traffic and the temptation to drink offered by saloons is removed. Alcoholic liquors can be procured only at the department stores. There is no bar there, no lounging place, nothing in the way of surroundings that would in any way tempt one to drink. No drinking of liquors is allowed in the department stores nor on the premises. As libraries and reading rooms and pleasure resorts abound in all parts of the island, and as no alcoholic liquors are sold or used at such places, drunkenness has almost entirely disappeared. But few saloonkeepers follow the calling from choice in any country. Give them more desirable employment, and a very large proportion of them would go out of the liquor selling and distilling business. Liquors are manufactured by the Commonwealth for medicinal and mechanical purposes in moderate quantities and are not adulterated. They are thus much less harmful than those made for profit in other countries."

"During this interview," said the editor, "you spoke of prisons and asylums. May I enquire how you manage those institutions?"

"Since we abandoned the competitive system of business," replied Ashton, "crime of all kinds has greatly diminished. I suppose you are aware that in your country the great majority of inmates of your penitentiaries are there because of

offenses committed against the property rights of your people—such offenses as defalcations, swindling, forgery, burglary, perjury, theft, robbery, etc. A very large number convicted of the graver crimes, such as assaults, and murder, perpetrated those offenses from an impulse to obtain property or money. Now, our Socialist Commonwealth has removed all temptation to commit such crimes, hence we have very few criminals. Our treatment of convicts is kind and of a reformatory nature. A strict discipline is enforced in our prisons, but the criminal is encouraged to reform. At the expiration of his term of confinement he is furnished employment in one of the three classes named, on an equality with all other citizens. It may therefore be easily perceived why we have very few criminals. We are careful always to keep the younger and less hardened convicts from associating with those of a more pronounced and depraved type. Of course we have reform schools for youthful offenders. As to our insane: They too are rapidly diminishing. In the United States a large proportion of those whose minds became unbalanced were made insane by the fierce and cruel competition you have there. Loss of property, failure in business, and almost constant high nervous strain to make money, bank suspensions, despondency on the part of parents to supply the necessities of life for their children, hard, exhaustive labor, insufficient food, unusual exposure in the awful struggle to secure property, and the mothers giving birth to children badly balanced mentally because of poverty and consequent despondency—all these contribute very largely to

the crowding of your asylums for the insane. We have a few such unfortunates, but their number grows less every year. I have no doubt that our economic system of co-operation and our maternity hospitals will in one or two generations almost entirely prevent all insanity among our people. We inaugurated a new departure from your method of treating the insane in the United States. We do not huddle them together in large numbers, for to do so creates conditions under which it is difficult to restore them to their right mind. Some of our scientists and psychologists maintain that insanity is contagious. Instances are cited in which sane attendants from long association with the insane have themselves lost their mental balance, while other instances are given in which insane persons were soon restored to their normal condition by being separated from other insane persons. We therefore segregate our insane into small groups, and by music, pleasant surroundings, frequent change of environments, and hypnotic treatment in connection with proper diet, and the most advanced medical treatment, we have been very successful in restoring them to their right mind."

"Do you have banks in Zanland?" asked Mr. Fay.

"No," said Ashton, "we have no use for banks. Money loaning, mortgages, interest-bearing notes, pawn shops, brokers' offices, stock gambling, lotteries—in fact all speculation and gambling, and one man overreaching and exploiting his neighbor, are unknown here."

"You have courts and lawyers, I presume?" said the editor.

"Our courts," said Ashton, "are very simple institutions, and have little to do. Since we abandoned the competitive system of business which also abolished cause for fighting among neighbors, nineteen-twentieths of the civil litigation has disappeared. We have one court for each designated district, and two judges to each court who preside alternately. The main features of the old trial by jury are maintained in this court which has jurisdiction of both civil and criminal cases. An appeal from the decision of this court may be taken to the General Assembly and from the Assembly to the people at the polls. As in other matters the verdict of the people, which is obtained by the Referendum already explained, is final."

"Your system so far outlined," said the editor, "seems so fair and so sensible that I am almost persuaded that it might be adopted in all civilized countries, but until it is so adopted it occurs to me that there is one serious defect."

"And what is that,' asked Mr. Ashton.

"Your time checks," said the editor, "may be and it seems they are, sufficiently good on which to conduct all the domestic business of your State, but they do not pass current in other countries. I take it that you do not import any goods for the reason that you cannot purchase any thing abroad with your Time Checks or Labor Certificates. Am I not correct, Mr. Ashton?"

"Your supposition," said Ashton, "that our Time Checks have little or no value outside of Zanland is correct, and yet we have no difficulty in buying abroad any goods we may desire. We import but little, however, as our island contains

nearly everything in the way of raw material necessary for our happiness, when we apply our labor to those materials, but we do import some articles. We have in force reciprocity treaties, with other countries. As we have, in Zanland, gold mines from which we take large quantities of the yellow ore, which with us is a commodity and not money, and which is stored in our depositories, we can and do, easily exchange the gold at its bullion value with foreigners for the goods we wish to buy of them. The foreigner coins the bullion into money, but we do not. Our system of exchange is infinitely superior to that of the foreigner. Our money, being paper devoid in itself of intrinsic value, and only representing value, cannot be speculated in. Metal money not only represents value, but in and of itself contains a value as a commodity which can be used for purposes other than that of passing as money. It often fluctuates because its value depends on supply and demand. The use of metal money has caused hundreds of widespread commercial panics in which scores of thousands of honest industrious people lost the fruits of their industry of a lifetime.

"We also export some of our products, other than gold bullion, which under reciprocity, are easily exchanged for those things we want from other countries. Individual citizens of Zanland who contemplate going abroad may also equip themselves with the means of purchasing goods in other countries, by exchanging their Time Checks, at the depository, for gold bullion which they carry with them to other countries which bullion is easily converted into the currency of

such country or exchanged for the goods they may wish to buy."

Here Mr. Fay interrupted by asking:

"I understand," said he, "that all the food and clothing required by your people are produced collectively. Now I can readily see how the clothing can be distributed from the department stores on presentation of Time Checks, but I do not clearly understand how the things the people want to eat are distributed. Do you, in Zanland, have cooking departments and department eating houses?"

"It is the policy of our people," replied Ashton, "to preserve the home and the family. The Commonwealth provides each family a house with half an acre of ground free from taxes and rental. The right of the family to occupy the place indefinitely is supreme against the claim of every other person. If, however, they vacate it, and take up their residence elsewhere, another family may move in and hold it against all others. Now the family can purchase their food with their labor checks, and prepare their own meals at home, if they prefer to do so, and their purchases are delivered to them from the department store. This is done as easily here as your groceries are delivered to you in America. For the convenience, however, of those who have no families, and for families who do not desire to prepare their own meals, the Commonwealth conducts restaurants or eating houses in all towns and hamlets, in which a majority of electors have legally expressed their desire to have such a house. Here the meals are prepared by assistants of the Distributive Department, and are paid for in Time

Checks at a price fixed by the proper officials. A great many women find that these public dining halls relieve them of much anxiety and labor, and they prefer to take their meals there instead of at home. As all profit is eliminated, the meals are furnished at a price that is nominal. In this connection it will be proper, perhaps, for me to say that we maintain in every district a nursery or children's home. Here children under ten years of age are sent if the parents are incapacitated to take proper care of them. The little ones are well provided for, and have kindergarten instruction until they are able to enter the public schools. We also have an infant's temporary home. Any mother may here leave her child for an hour or a day while she attends church, or a lecture, or any amusement."

"You speak of churches," said Rev. Fay. "Do you have an established system of religion supported by the State?"

"No," replied Ashton, "in matters of religion every one is entirely free to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience. The Commonwealth furnishes public halls and lecture rooms in abundance in every section of the island, and they are at all times open to lectures on science, or economics, or philosophy, or theology, or any subject of general interest, but no sect, clan nor class has exclusive use of these public audience rooms. Nearly every form of religious belief has adherents in our country, and one has as much right as the other to hold meetings in these halls, but they must observe definite rules which provide against the possibility of a conflict as to dates of occupying such public places.

There is a janitor in charge of each place who attends to the matter. Some denominations prefer to erect, at their own expense, and by their own labor, church edifices of their own and have done so. They have unrestricted liberty to do this if they so desire. In such case the State does not surrender its ownership of the ground occupied, but issues a permit for a definite amount of space to be thus used. Since the launching of our Co-operative Commonwealth, however, the foundation of which is justice to all, and the Golden Rule, the denominational differences have largely disappeared, and the great majority of our people attend those meetings at the public halls where the speaker puts the strongest emphasis on a life of kindness and good deeds, rather than upon a strict observance of creeds, or forms."

"Did you," asked Rev. Fay, "in urging the people of Zanland to adopt Socialism, appeal to their moral or religious sentiments, or present the economic necessity from a materialistic and business standpoint, for such a movement?"

"We did both," replied Ashton, "but we put the greater emphasis upon the economic necessity for the change. People must eat and have clothing to wear and be sheltered. To secure these to all according to their deeds is a purely business transaction, and is devoid of mere sentiment. Men's religious sentiments or convictions as to what is right and what is wrong differ so widely that an appeal for economic justice addressed only to their religious sentiments brings confusion and disagreements, but people of all sorts of religious beliefs and those having no religious convictions can be brought to see that no country can long

prosper in which the working people are exploited out of the greater portion of what they produce, and are crowded into deep poverty and ignorance. And yet we did appeal also to those whose consciences had been awakened to see the injustice and moral wrong of the competitive system which is based on the theory and practice of 'every one looking out for himself regardless of the injury he may do to others." We did try to arouse the people's innate sense of justice. To some, Socialism is a religion, because it is founded on fair play and the Golden Rule and places a high estimate on mankind. To others it is an honest, sensible, economic, methodical and scientific system for carrying on the intricate business of a great Nation."

"May I enquire," said the editor, "how can the State erect so many free lecture rooms and places of amusement and other public improvements and provide for the support of men and women who have attained to the age of fifty years and furnish free instruction to all the youths, etc., while nobody labors except those between the ages of twenty-one and fifty, and they working but four to six hours per day. How can all these desirable things be enjoyed without bankrupting the State?"

"No nation working under the competitive economic system could do what we are doing without speedily becoming bankrupt," said Ashton. "The secret of our success is in preventing waste and maintaining a proper system of distribution of the products of labor. The old governments expend untold millions in building great war ships, in manufacturing guns and other war mate-

rials, and in supporting armies. Some battle ships cost $5,000,000 to $6,000,000 each. All these things are intended for destroying property and killing people. They produce nothing. They waste billions of wealth produced by labor. A little calculation of the cost of supporting the armies and navies and of the vast wealth invested in war implements will disclose the fact that in this way alone enough is wasted, which if saved, would inaugurate in Europe or America all the good things we have in Zanland, and reduce the hours of working people as we have reduced them here. But we save in scores of other ways, where there is senseless, wicked, profligate waste in the old countries. In those countries where business is conducted under competition every merchant and other business man is competing with every other one. In every city and town there are one hundred or one thousand small dealers where one central department store and two or three branches could easily transact the business that they all are doing. Millions of dollars are annually wasted in rentals by these small establishments. There is waste in clerk hire, in fuel, lighting and in numerous other ways. Each must advertise his business or fail, and uncounted millions of dollars are wasted in advertising. The Publisher's Guide of Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A., says that John Wanamaker, merchant, of that city, expends $1,000 per day in advertising his goods. It would be no exaggeration to say that each year several hundred millions of dollars are wasted in the United States in advertising alone. Other hundreds of millions are wasted in fencing, in erecting banking buildings and court

houses, and in thousands of other ways. Manufacturing is conducted in a haphazard way; railroads are constructed where not needed; many ships are built where a few only are required, and the whole competitive system of business is conducted without order or system, resulting in disastrous periodical financial panics rending the country with lock-outs and strikes, often reducing vast numbers of working men to a condition bordering on starvation and breeding violence and anarchy because of the selfishness, recklessness and greed, which are its legitimate offspring. All these hundreds of billions wasted in the old countries are saved in the Collective Commonwealth, and are turned into schools, in supporting the aged in comfort, in establishing libraries and lecture halls, in shortening the hours of labor of the working people and in making the people intelligent and happy. It is astounding to some of us that more of the thinkers of the world have not long ago discovered these startling defects in the competitive system of economics, and aroused the people of the world to a realization of the true condition of things. Benjamin Franklin, a hundred years ago, said: 'If every man did his share of the labor of the world, four hours' work daily, would be all that need be required of any one.' He spoke truly but should have added that society should see to it that no man should be robbed of the fruits of his four hours of daily labor."

"It is contended by some," said Mr. Fay, "that Socialism would destroy the incentive of men. What have you to say in answer to that claim?"

"Yes," replied Ashton, "it would destroy the incentive of some men—of the greedy monopolist

who wants to get something for nothing. Our co-operative system curbs the incentive of that class of people who add nothing to the wealth, or the wisdom, or the happiness of humanity—those whose chief incentive is to amass great riches, by hook or by crook, without returning any equivalent to those who created that wealth; but our system greatly stimulates the incentive of the inventor, the artist, the surgeon, the teacher, the musician, the statesman, the industrious citizen —the lover of his kind. It appeals to a man's higher sentiments. The competitive appeals to his baser. Medals, and titles, and distinction, and honor are bestowed on such as distinguish themselves in any honorable calling, and these are far more potent and effective stimulants to man's incentive than the mere getting of money by exploiting others out of it to whom it honestly belongs. Our experience is that it is far better for the many that the incentive to get something for nothing by the few, be restricted and even better for the greedy exploiters themselves. I would not be understood as saying that the rich monopolists are all personally bad men. Not at all; many of them are kindhearted and charitably inclined. Many of them give largely to the poor, and to churches, and public libraries. But it is justice not charity that the masses want. These multi-millionaires are blinded by a robber system of economics, hoary with age. They are not, as a class, philosophers. They, having succeeded in amassing wealth, think that prevailing business methods are good ones. Like the slaveholders of the Southern States before the war of 1861-65, they want to be let alone. When they become

fully awakened, they will clearly perceive the great but unintentional wrong they have done their fellowman, and they will rejoice at their emancipation. These great 'Captains of Industry' under the competitive system, will become most efficient cabinet officers and managers in the Collective Commonwealth."

"What effect has your Socialist government had on the ignorant and the lawless classes," asked the editor.

"Ah, now," replied Ashton, "you have propounded an important question and it gives me great pleasure to answer it.

"Our theory is that men and women are not naturally bad—that they are not prone to do evil as the sparks are to fly upward, as the old theology taught, but are more inclined to good than to evil. Our lives are largely what they are from heredity and environment—especially the latter. It is creditable to the masses that there is so little crime among them in competitive countries. They create all wealth and receive only about a sixth of it. Millions of farmers work hard for a lifetime for little more than board and clothing; other millions of mechanics and workmen in the cities own no homes, and can barely live and pay their rent; other millions live in shacks and the basements and attics and slums in enforced squalor and ignorance and beget children who must beg, or steal, or starve; other millions work in dark, and damp, and ill ventilated sweat shops for a pittance; millions of girls are forced into lives of dishonor for bread. All this is the direct fruit of the competitive system of business. It is the mother of drunkenness, ignor-

ance, prostitution, theft, suicide and murder. Competition knows no pity. Its motto is, and always was, and always will be: 'Every one for himself.' It appeals only to the mean and greedy in man. It enables its votaries to succeed only by the undoing and sacrifice of one, or one hundred, or one thousand others. Nations practicing it, go to war with other Nations and burn, and destroy, and ravish, and rob, and kill, and deluge the world with blood. An individual practicing it, builds up himself by pulling down his competitor. Competition in all the old countries, crowds the poor houses and asylums with its victims, fills the courts with neighbor warring against neighbor, burdens the columns of the newspapers daily with accounts of burglary, defalcations, embezzlement, robbery, and suicide. It erects the gallows and incarcerates its hundreds of thousands in the jails and penitentiaries.

"Competition is war, and Gen. Sherman said, 'War is hell.' But you ask me what are the fruits of our Socialist government in Zanland. The motto of Socialism is: 'Justice to all; an injury to one is the concern of all.' What fruits would you expect from a State resting upon such a foundation and carrying out that principle. Democracy, or a government by the people is the chief cornerstone of our State. Then our first duty is to the children. The Commonwealth feeds, clothes and educates every child, and fully equips him for the race of life. It guarantees to every boy and girl equal opportunities with every other one; it furnishes employment to all able-bodied adults, and guarantees that he shall receive the full benefit of his labor; it provides for the

aged and renders their life free from toil and want. It recognizes the political equality of men and women alike; it abolishes kings and political bosses; it prevents the greedy man from robbing his neighbor of any of the fruits of his labor; it removes every temptation to commit crime; it fosters temperance and industry; it builds institutions of learning; it establishes free libraries; it guarantees religious liberty; it encourages all to make their chief incentive a desire to store their minds with useful knowledge and to bless their fellowmen instead of robbing them. It holds up to young and old the high ideals of justice, brotherhood, good citizenship, and peace on earth, good will to men, and lastly, but more important than all, it honors wifehood and motherhood, and by its maternity hospitals guarantees to future generations that they shall be well born.

"It gives me great pleasure to repeat, gentlemen, that in Zanland where the Collective Commonwealth is now firmly established, that we have but little inebriety, no robbery, no embezzlements, no swindling, no stock or other gambling, and very little vice or crime of any kind. All motive for committing crime has been eliminated by our economic system. We have no labor strikes, no lock-outs, no blacklistings, no unemployed, no tramps; but little use for police, and less for soldiers; our jails are nearly all empty and our schools are full. Our ministers are, for the first time in many centuries, preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

"To briefly sum up the many good features of Socialism, as in practice in Zanland, I remark, our day's labor is shorter than in other coun-

tries because we save millions where others waste; we co-operate for the good of all while they permit greedy, non-producing schemers to amass colossal riches by exploitation, while the wealth-creators struggle and perish; we produce for the use of all and distribute those productions to all according to their service, while in other countries the many produce and the few appropriate the production. Here every man reaps as he sows and all are sowers. In other countries the sowers reap little while those who do not sow, harvest much. Here none are masters, none are slaves; elsewhere the few who produce nothing are masters and the workers are slaves, for if the few own the machinery and other means of production and hire the many to serve, the employer IS a master and his employe *is* a slave. He who owns the things necessary to sustain the life of his fellowman owns that man as truly as did master ever own slave. The propertyless man can live only by selling his labor; that he cannot do without a buyer; the employer can therefore dictate to the worker the terms upon which he will permit him to live. Did master ever have greater power over slave?

"On this very day that we talk," continued Ashton, "there comes information of great labor strikes in America and some portions of Europe. The wage worker in the coal mines, deep down in the earth is struggling for an increase of a few cents in his wages that he may live and support his wife and children in a little better condition than does the ignorant savage who lives in a cave, but the same cablegram that informs us of the struggles of these exploited slaves also

bring the information that the coal barons and trust magnates, have called out the police and soldiery and the slaves are being clubbed and shot into subjection. But this state of things, gentlemen, cannot long continue even in those countries. At the beginning of the twentieth century the despoiled ones are awakening from their long stupor, and are enquiring by what right do a few men who add nothing to the wealth or wisdom of the world monopolize the coal, and the oil, and the metals, which nature stored up for the use of all the people? Who gave them individual ownership of electricity and water power, and the power of steam, and of lands, and machinery, and all the means of producing the things which people must have to live and to properly discharge their duty to God and their wives and little ones. By what authority do they enslave us, and starve us, and scourge us, and shoot us, we who do the work of the world and they do nothing except to riot in luxury from the possession of the vast wealth they have taken from us?

"The answer, gentlemen, to that question, that *they have no such right,* will ere long reverberate around the globe, and woe be to him who flings himself athwart the path of the coming millions of downtrodden, despoiled, outraged and robbed toilers who, now awakened to a realization that they have both a natural and a moral right to the benefit of their own industry, are marching on to victory and to the establishment of a Co-operative Commonwealth which will last forever, because founded on the eternal principles of justice, the chief cornerstone of which shall be: 'As ye

would that others should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.' "

The interview being ended, the visitors, after thanking Mr. and Mrs. Ashton, and Mr. Batty, for their kindness, and bidding them farewell withdrew. They soon after left for their home in the United States. On the staunch ship that brought them home they had many conversations in which they talked over all that they had seen and heard. They had both been soundly converted to Socialism, and each pledged the other that they would devote the remaining days of their life in advocating the adoption in America of an economic and political system like unto that of Zanland.

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